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Official Records

President: Mr. Essy (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Agenda item 37 (continued)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

(i) Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/177 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

(ii) Draft resolution (A/49/L.19)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

(i) Reports of the Secretary-General (A/49/158, A/49/263 and Corr.1, A/49/356, A/49/376, A/49/387 and Corr.1, A/49/388, A/49/396, A/49/397, A/49/431, A/49/456, A/49/466, A/49/470, A/49/516, A/49/562, A/49/581, A/49/683)

(ii) Draft resolutions (A/49/L.26, A/49/L.28, A/49/L.30, A/49/L.31, A/49/L.32, A/49/L.34, A/49/L.36)

(c) International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

(i) Note by the Secretary-General (A/49/453)

(ii) Report of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (A/CONF.172/9 and Add.1)

(iii) Draft resolutions (A/49/L.21, A/49/L.29)

(d) International cooperation to mitigate the environmental consequences on Kuwait and other countries in the region resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait: report of the Secretary-General (A/49/207 and Corr.1)

(f) Emergency international assistance for a solution to the problem of refugees, the restoration of total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development in war-stricken Rwanda: draft resolution (A/49/L.24/Rev.1)

(g) Special assistance to countries receiving refugees from Rwanda: draft resolution (A/49/L.17/Rev.1)

Mr. Owada (Japan): The international community is now facing an enormous challenge as it attempts to respond to the dramatic increase in humanitarian emergencies that have been taking place since the end of the cold war. It is discouraging in the extreme that the end of the East-West confrontation has not led to a more peaceful and stable world, but instead brought about a proliferation of regional conflicts resulting from the outbreak of ethnic strife that had been contained under



old regimes, such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the former Yugoslavia and in the Caucasus region of the former Soviet Union. Civil strife likewise has intensified and grown more complex in the past few years, particularly in such African nations as Liberia, Somalia, Angola and Rwanda. The international community has had to struggle with an attempt to respond in a timely and effective manner.

In this turbulent situation it is imperative for the humanitarian organizations to strengthen coordination and cooperation in their work for coping with these emergencies, all of which have complex political, social, economic, security and humanitarian dimensions. While acknowledging that the humanitarian organizations of the United Nations system, other humanitarian entities and non-governmental organizations have been making the best efforts to enhance their capacity for timely action in a coordinated manner, my delegation feels that they have now been pushed to the point where they are no longer capable of coping with the situation without introducing a more effective system of coordination and cooperation, against the background of a continuing rapid increase in the magnitude and scope of these crises.

Under the circumstances, the international community must urgently find ways and means of tackling this problem, which is well on its way to spinning out of control.

My delegation appreciates the efforts that the Emergency Relief Coordinator, with the support of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, is making to strengthen coordination among all humanitarian organizations. In particular, it recognizes the important role being played by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in launching the interagency consolidated appeal.

Admittedly, the task of the Emergency Relief Coordinator is not an easy one. My delegation believes that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs can play its role more effectively as coordinator among operational agencies by focusing on the task of sorting out their respective responsibilities at the field level of these operational agencies, especially at the initial stage of these complex emergencies. At the same time, it will be important that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs recognize the respective mandate of each of the operational agencies, and exercise caution in not delaying the process for the sake of a quick response to be undertaken by these agencies. The reorganization of the Department that is currently under way should also be geared towards contributing to this end,

as the purpose of such a reorganization should be to facilitate a system-wide response to such complex emergencies.

Japan also wishes to emphasize the need to further develop and strengthen cooperation between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and other departments of the Secretariat, notably the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. The Emergency Relief Coordinator needs to strengthen his advocacy role in the planning of United Nations responses to emergencies in order to ensure that the principles of humanitarian assistance are taken fully into account.

My delegation would also like to see the Inter-Agency Standing Committee reinforce its function as the primary mechanism for interagency coordination under the Emergency Relief Coordinator. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee should also look into the area of so-called homeless issues, such as the question of the treatment of internally displaced persons, the issue of assistance in mine-clearance activities, and the problem of the continuum from emergency relief to rehabilitation. Especially on the problem of the continuum from emergency relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction, it would seem important for the United Nations system as a whole to plan a comprehensive policy and a strategy for the post-emergency period in a given situation, so that the momentum for multilateral cooperation generated by actions to cope with an emergency situation may be sustained and developed into the stage of rehabilitation and reconstruction. In this respect, my delegation appreciates the fact that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee task force has developed guidelines for an operational framework which aims at enhancing the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to the requirements of the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development. I hope that these guidelines will be further elaborated so that it will be possible to translate them into practical actions at the country level.

With regard to the development of an emergency information system and an early-warning system on emergencies, as stressed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 46/182 and 48/57, Japan takes note of the efforts made so far by various agencies in this field and earnestly hopes that those mechanisms are going to be further developed, so that an improved level of coordination in the response to emergencies may be achieved in such areas as preparedness, contingency planning and appropriate preventive humanitarian action.

My delegation has read with great interest the comprehensive report prepared by the Secretary-General in response to the request for additional information on the problem of rapid-response coordination and on the shortcomings in the functioning of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund. My delegation is of the view that in principle a procedure by which a humanitarian coordinator will be designated from among the most qualified persons representing the various humanitarian agencies involved in a given situation, including the Resident Coordinators, will be most feasible and effective at the field level. It is the strong hope of my delegation that these procedures will be implemented as soon as possible. With regard to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, my delegation agrees with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee that it serves a useful function, especially in enhancing the Organization's capacity to respond quickly to a complex emergency situation. While we are very much concerned about the falling level of resources of the Fund, we are firmly of the opinion that merely increasing the size of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund will not lead to a long-term resolution of the fundamental problem of the Fund, namely, the fact that it is functioning less and less as a revolving fund. With a view to finding ways to cope with this situation, my delegation would like to request the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to provide us with a long-term plan for improving the functioning of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund before increasing its size.

As to the recommendation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for continuing the arrangement for financing rapid-response coordination from the interest earned by the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, Japan has no objection and supports the continued use of the interest earned by the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to enhance rapid-response coordination, such as the dispatch of joint emergency-needs-assessment missions.

Japan has been doing its utmost to alleviate the suffering of people around the world, whether the situation involves a complex emergency or a natural disaster. Thus, my Government has been providing humanitarian assistance for refugees or internally displaced persons, either through humanitarian agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) or on a bilateral basis. Last year, assistance from the Japanese Government went to such diverse countries as Azerbaijan, Liberia, the Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Madagascar, Uganda and Mozambique.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the intention of Japan to continue to intensify such humanitarian assistance in the future.

With regard to the situation in Rwanda, my Government considers the tragedy there to be one of the biggest humanitarian issues the international community has to tackle. My Government is cooperating fully with the international community in providing Rwandan refugees and displaced persons with humanitarian assistance as well as in facilitating the creation of a favourable environment for the early repatriation of refugees.

The Government of Japan will also try its best to assist the new Government in Kigali in its efforts to help its people out of misery, and has been providing it with emergency humanitarian assistance, including the provision of food and the supply of medicine through relevant international humanitarian organizations.

Finally, let me turn to agenda item 37 (c), "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction", and offer some comments of my delegation in this regard. The initiative taken by Japan in cooperation with the Group of 77 on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was motivated by the recognition that reduction of natural disasters is a crucial element in our overall effort to secure favourable conditions for development.

It is important that the international community continue to devote attention to this issue, which tends to be forgotten in the midst of more immediate day-to-day needs, because natural disasters characteristically occur unexpectedly and cause heavy damage. We must always be vigilant in order to prevent, mitigate and prepare for natural disasters.

My delegation believes that, ultimately, the success of the Decade will depend on the successful implementation of the Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held in Yokohama City in May of this year. I earnestly hope that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution submitted by the Economic and Social Council, which endorses the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, and in particular its Plan of Action.

The Plan of Action identifies specific actions to be taken at the community and national levels, the subregional and regional levels and the international

level. With respect to activities at the community and national levels, my delegation notes that all countries are called upon to incorporate the goal of disaster reduction in their socio-economic development planning, which, in my view, is very important in reducing vulnerability to disasters. At the subregional and regional levels, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the Plan of Action emphasizes the importance of promoting and strengthening cooperation in activities to prevent, reduce and mitigate disasters. My delegation is also pleased that among the activities at the international level are the provision of adequate support for the activities of the Decade, including those of the secretariat of the Decade, and the holding of a second world conference on natural disaster reduction by the year 2000 to review the accomplishments of the Decade.

Japan, for its part, intends to contribute even more vigorously than it has done in the past to the promotion of activities of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Butler of Australia, for his statement summing up the informal consultations conducted on agenda item 37; we express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen, and to the Department for Humanitarian Affairs for their efforts over the past year in coordinating emergency humanitarian assistance.

The Chinese delegation takes a great interest in emergency humanitarian assistance. It also attaches great importance to and supports the coordinating role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in that area. In recent years, disasters of various kinds in the world have notably increased, causing heavy losses of life and property in afflicted countries and regions — developing countries in particular. The frequency and increasing number of humanitarian crises have on the one hand hampered the development of the developing countries and on the other hand led to the diversion of resources from development to emergency-disaster-relief assistance. The international community should pay attention to this trend and should make efforts to reverse it.

We are of the view that natural disasters are one of the factors that hinder economic development in the developing countries, a matter to which due attention should be given. However, we have noted with regret that

in its disaster-relief assistance the United Nations focuses on man-made disasters, but does not pay enough attention to natural disasters.

There are over 50 million people in the world who need international assistance as a result of man-made disasters or other man-made factors. The United Nations should and must do what it can to help them. But, at the same time, there is also a huge number of people in need of assistance because of natural disasters. For instance, 21 million people in sub-Saharan countries are threatened by drought. We therefore believe that relief assistance for man-made and relief assistance for natural disasters are of equal importance. While strengthening its ability to respond rapidly to complex emergencies, the United Nations should also study how to strengthen its ability to respond quickly to natural disasters, especially sudden and severe ones. Moreover, attention should be given to post-disaster recovery and reconstruction so as to help the afflicted countries with their sustained development.

Thirdly, the shortfall of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund should be properly addressed. In the first place, efforts should be made to strengthen management. There is a Chinese proverb which says: "Use the best steel to make the knife's edge". In other words, scarce valuable resources should be used in disaster relief activities where they are most needed. In the second place, the size of the Fund should be appropriately enlarged.

Fourthly, the Chinese delegation supports the Yokohama Plan of Action and Strategy adopted at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. We wish to inform the Assembly that, in response to the appeals made in these two documents, the Chinese Government is going to formulate a comprehensive national plan on natural disaster reduction, the main purpose of which is to prevent flood and drought and protect grain production and the environment. This plan will constitute an important component of the country's ninth five-year plan for development.

The Chinese delegation is of the view that greater efforts are required of the international community to turn the documents adopted at the Yokohama Conference into concrete action. The key to this lies in financial resources and technology. Ninety per cent of the world's natural disasters occur in the developing countries, whose economic foundations are weak and which have difficulty preventing and combating disasters. Therefore, the international community, and the developed countries in

particular, should increase financial assistance and transfer technologies relating to disaster reduction to the developing countries in order to help them better prevent and combat disasters. Only in this way can the objectives set out in the Yokohama Plan of Action and Strategy be achieved. Otherwise they will likely end up as idle theorizing.

China is a developing country in which 80 million people still live in poverty. China is also a country frequently hit by natural disasters. According to incomplete statistics, so far this year flooding has cost the lives of over 5,000 people and caused about \$17 billion in damage. In spite of such severe natural disasters, China has provided food and medicine for Rwandan refugees through the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs and has offered disaster-relief assistance and special economic assistance, within its capacity to do so, to other countries through bilateral channels. In the future, China will continue to work with the international community for disaster prevention, reduction and relief throughout the world.

In conclusion, we wish to emphasize that it is an unshirkable duty of the international community to provide humanitarian assistance and special economic assistance to disaster-stricken countries. We hold that such assistance should continue to be humanitarian, neutral, fair and unconditional.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): It is indeed a sad reality that the global need for humanitarian emergency assistance is more urgent today than it has ever been. More than 30 million people in countries in Asia, Africa, the Caucasus, the former Yugoslavia and Central America are in dire need of emergency assistance. They are the unfortunate victims of the break-up of nations, ethnic and civil conflicts, of flagrant disregard for basic human rights and international humanitarian law and of devastating natural disasters. We deplore the toll which natural and man-made disasters have taken on human life and the particularly severe economic and social impact they have had in developing countries.

In the three years since we adopted resolution 46/182, and with it the establishment of new mechanisms for the United Nations system's response to emergencies, these new arrangements have been put under severe strain. There have been some remarkable successes as regards a comprehensive, timely and well-coordinated response to humanitarian emergencies. This demonstrates that, when there is the political will to place humanitarianism first, much can be achieved. The reverse, unfortunately, is also

true: If there is no political will humanitarian assistance becomes difficult, if not impossible.

The discussion of the Secretary-General's report on the occasion of this year's substantive session of the Economic and Social Council showed that considerable progress towards a more systematic and coherent response to emergencies has been achieved, particularly as regards efforts at streamlining the new mechanisms and improving vertical and horizontal coordination. In this connection, we have noted that the players involved have made concerted efforts to enhance their capacities for timely and coordinated action, including an improved definition of their respective responsibilities and better analyses of emergency situations and needs assessments.

We have also noted that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has dealt with important issues, such as access to victims, security of personnel and relief supplies, humanitarian imperatives in conflict situations, internally displaced persons, de-mining, demobilization and the unintended impact of sanctions. As the mutual cooperation between United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the Department for Humanitarian Affairs progresses, thus leading to an improved overall performance, the intensified meetings between the Emergency Relief Coordinator and members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee will become ever-more important. The results of these consultations should be promptly disseminated, including to interested Governments.

We share the widely held belief that it must be the foremost objective of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to provide leadership on behalf of the Secretary-General and to function as facilitator and coordinator for the international community. This also means that the Coordinator and his Department must receive the fullest partnership cooperation from the other actors of the system. I should like at this stage to express our deep appreciation for the dedicated work done by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen.

Particularly in situations where political and humanitarian dimensions are interlinked, the relationship between humanitarian emergency assistance, political matters and peace-keeping are of critical importance. In these situations it is also necessary to safeguard the principles of the humanity, neutrality and impartiality of relief assistance.

As regards the all-important subject of strengthened field coordination of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies, the addendum to the Secretary-General's report contains useful information, including contemplated measures for the appointment of humanitarian coordinators.

As we have already observed, demands on the international community for emergency assistance have reached unprecedented levels. At the same time, capacities to meet them are overstretched and the resources for response are not unlimited. More attention will therefore have to be paid to cost-reducing measures in relief operations as well as to cost-avoidance through early warning, preventive diplomacy and preventive development.

While the Central Emergency Fund has proved its value as a revolving cash-flow instrument, we share the opinion that its operation could be improved by ensuring the timely repayment of funds advanced. In this connection we have noted from the addendum to the Secretary-General's report that operational organizations have to turn to the Fund as their own emergency funds are

"either limited, inadequate or depleted".
(A/49/177/Add.1, para. 57)

In this connection a study of the complementarity of the various emergency resources seems to be called for.

Still on the subject of resources, we must be allowed to reiterate last year's invitation to the Secretary-General in resolution 48/57 to make a further examination of all possible ways and means to provide adequate qualified personnel and administrative resources commensurate with the heavy responsibilities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Since almost 50 per cent of the Department's administrative costs are currently funded from extrabudgetary resources, this examination would appear to be urgent.

The Secretary-General's report once again shows that sudden-onset natural disasters and similar emergencies continue to be a major preoccupation for the international community. We concur that it must be the Department's primary objective to play a catalytic role in the promotion of disaster-mitigation strategies, that is, prevention and preparedness, particularly in developing countries.

In the framework of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction valuable work has already been accomplished, as is clearly reflected in the report on the

World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. The Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, together with the Plan of Action, certainly provides a further impetus to achieve the goals of the Decade.

In connection with rapid-response mechanisms to natural disasters, a number of initiatives have been developed which are now being adapted to complex emergency situations. As an active participant in the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Teams, the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and the Military and Civil Defense Assets Project, Austria welcomes this evolution. These response mechanisms could also be used in connection with the growing challenge of environmental emergencies.

Recent experience in complex emergencies has taught us that relief work has to be undertaken in increasingly dangerous environments. It is of the utmost importance that the safety of relief personnel should be appropriately secured. Measures already under consideration may have to be intensified even further.

I should like briefly to focus on a specific issue, which is also under consideration in this cluster and which concerns the economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions, in particular against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Austria was a sponsor of resolution 48/210, which was adopted at last year's session of the General Assembly, and we welcome the Secretary-General's report prepared for our consideration under this item. We are also a sponsor of this year's draft resolution.

In its statement in the Second Committee during last year's debate the Austrian delegation focused extensively on this issue. Sanctions have become an important tool against those who flout fundamental principles of international law. At the same time they are costly to members of the international community. The embargo disturbs trade links, leads to higher transport costs and difficult market situations and also damages the Danube transport system. Austria, although it is itself affected, is nevertheless firmly committed to the unwavering implementation of the said sanctions as long as necessary.

A number of States neighbouring Serbia and Montenegro, and other States as well, are incurring particular economic hardship as a consequence of their implementation of the sanctions. We would like to commend those States for their ongoing commitment to

the strict application of the embargo. In Austria's view, the deliberations under this agenda item will be a further way to pledge support to the States most affected.

In conclusion, may I be permitted to thank delegations for their kind words referring to the role with which you, Mr. President, have entrusted me in accordance with resolution 48/162, to coordinate the draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 37. I will of course do my best, in cooperation with all interested delegations, to live up to expectations. I am confident that during this process we will very soon be able to identify the large number of draft resolutions that already enjoy consensus in the Assembly and that, further, we will also arrive as soon as possible at genuine agreement on those drafts that might require further negotiations. I do hope that the consultation process, as introduced by last year's resolution, will be seen as a step towards a more comprehensive approach to be taken by the General Assembly with regard to individual draft resolutions under agenda item 37.

Mr. Karsgaard (Canada): This past year has seen a dramatic increase in emergency situations caused by man-made conflicts and natural catastrophes. Although an enormous price has been paid in human lives and material damage during these crises, an even higher price may have been paid afterward. Thirty million people in more than 29 countries urgently need immediate assistance.

However, emergency assistance is not the only challenge. At times an even more difficult challenge is to re-establish the basic components for the minimal functioning of a society. Too often, a vicious cycle of extreme poverty and the denial of basic rights becomes a source of internal conflict and leads to the disruption, if not the complete breakdown, of society. For this reason, we see a need to integrate the security, political and humanitarian dimensions of emergency assistance. There is also an urgent need to strengthen an effective humanitarian response as well as to promote greater cooperation among emergency-assistance organizations.

Canada is the first to recognize that the response of the United Nations system to this challenge has greatly improved over the past few years. Much of the credit for this goes to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen, and to his staff. The role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is now widely understood and accepted. The usefulness of the tools made available to the Department has been demonstrated. Consolidated appeals have become one of the essential

coordinating tools and the preferred channel through which the donor community responds.

Judging by the frequency with which various operators use it, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund has proved its usefulness. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee meets more frequently and has looked after so-called orphan issues, involving problems related to minesweeping, demobilization, displaced persons and the continuum from emergency to development.

Finally, in the Secretariat itself, the Department has taken important steps towards improving the division of work between Secretariat units in Geneva and in New York.

These adjustments will help to make the Department the centre of effective coordination of emergency assistance and a real example of value-added services, as compared to the individual action of each stakeholder. The initiatives approved to date, however, must be interpreted only as a step in a continuous process of readjusting to the realities in the field and to the requirements of increasingly complex crises.

(spoke in French)

Despite this noteworthy progress, Canada has begun promoting other improvements that relate mainly to the system's "rapid response" capabilities. For this rapid response to be effective, it must be based on three basic prerequisites: the appointment of a humanitarian coordinator in the field; inter-agency cooperation in the initial phase of the emergency; and the ability to rely on an emergency fund that is not hindered by the level of assets and delays in reimbursement. When resolution 48/57 was adopted, and during the Economic and Social Council's deliberations last summer, we strongly urged that a solution be found for these shortcomings.

We are pleased that these issues are meeting with the degree of positive response that the Emergency Coordinator notes in his report. We congratulate him on the efforts that have been made. The appointment of the Field Humanitarian Coordinator was the subject of a unanimous inter-agency agreement. This agreement states that the resident Coordinator will normally be the incumbent; otherwise, the Assistant Secretary-General will have the flexibility to designate a person with the necessary expertise from a previously approved list of experts. We hope that the logic and clarity of this agreement will ensure its effectiveness.

Rapid response depends also on close cooperation between agencies during the initial phase of the emergency. It assumes that the agency that occupies the predominant position in the field must be able to provide a certain degree of leadership. In other situations, plans must be made to dispatch an inter-agency team to the field to ensure an initial evaluation of needs. In all specific cases, we should expect agencies fully to support the coordinating activities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in terms of the personnel and means required. We encourage Member States to stress this requirement — for instance, at meetings of the executive boards of the agencies concerned.

(spoke in English)

Everyone will agree that the Central Emergency Revolving Fund lies at the heart of the ability to respond rapidly. Its use on 33 occasions for a total of \$103 million bears witness, at the very least, to the need for a fund initially endowed with \$50 million. Indeed, the crisis in Rwanda rekindled debate as to whether the level of this fund was sufficient at a time when barely \$5 million remained available in it.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Is the level of available resources a problem? Is red tape complicating their use and reimbursement? Are donors slow to respond to consolidated appeals? All of these are, no doubt, factors contributing to the problem.

There is no doubt in our minds that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be more selective in terms of the admissibility of requests that are submitted. These requests should meet the criteria of an "absolute emergency" and should meet the test of likely reimbursement by donors.

For their part, donors should respond promptly to consolidated appeals and provide an untied share of their grants to allow agencies to give priority to repaying the costs associated with rapid response. Within the consolidated appeal itself, an appropriate section should cover this item.

An increase in the fund must be considered if these measures prove to be insufficient. After all, there is obviously no obstacle to replenishing a voluntary fund. There may be the problem of a "floor", but certainly not

of a "ceiling". Potential donors should be canvassed to determine whether they are in a position to give.

However, there are other possible solutions to the cash-flow problem. Others have suggested measures that would provide for even greater selectivity, as well as an accelerated response to appeals. In-kind contributions have also been suggested as another approach. These possible solutions share a common objective: to maintain the Central Emergency Revolving Fund's feature as an emergency fund and as a last recourse when other means are, in fact, unavailable.

We have therefore invited the humanitarian Coordinator to examine these questions further, and we encourage him to continue the consultative process launched in response to resolution 48/57.

Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe): I should like, at the outset, to express Zimbabwe's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations. We have found it to be concise and informative, and it allows us to take stock of the state of implementation of General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 48/57. My delegation associates itself fully with the statement on this item made this morning by the Chairman of the Group of 77.

Zimbabwe is greatly concerned at the increasing number and the growing magnitude of humanitarian emergencies, which include natural disasters as well as so-called complex emergencies. As the report before us points out, more than 30 million people in 29 countries are in urgent need of emergency assistance. More than 20 million people in Africa are threatened by a severe drought, further exacerbating the suffering of the victims of civil strife in many parts of the continent. We are fully cognizant of the heavy toll, in human and material terms, that these crises take on the affected countries and of the obstacles that they create in their development efforts.

The adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 46/182 in December 1991 was a milestone in our quest to improve the response of the United Nations system and other international players to natural disasters and other emergencies. We are pleased that, since the adoption of that resolution, coordination of the humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations has been further strengthened, with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, playing a central role in

this process. The General Assembly, by that resolution, provided the United Nations with the necessary set of instruments for a coherent and timely response to humanitarian emergencies. Substantial progress has been made in the functioning of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the effective utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and the launching of the consolidated appeals. May I express our appreciation for the work done so far in implementing this resolution by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, under the leadership of Mr. Peter Hansen, and before him, Mr. Jan Eliasson of Sweden.

Zimbabwe attaches great importance to the role of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee as the primary mechanism within the United Nations for the inter-agency coordination of policy and strategic issues related to humanitarian assistance. The participation in the work of the Standing Committee by such organizations as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Organization for Migration is also important in this process. We appreciate the work that the Standing Committee has done with regard, among other things, to the guidelines on the consolidated appeals process. We welcome the focus of the Standing Committee this year on such important areas as resource mobilization; support for field coordination, the humanitarian aspect of sanctions; demining; and the transition from relief to development. We also share the view of Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen, as expressed before the Economic and Social Council on 13 July 1994, that relief organizations could benefit from a more systematic dialogue with Governments, including donors, on coordination issues relating to bilateral and multilateral assistance, as well as on a global overview to identify and address gaps in resources or programmes. We are interested in knowing the results of consultations in the Standing Committee in this regard.

We have noted from the Secretary-General's report that arrangements are underway for consultations between the Emergency Relief Coordinator and those responsible for the planning of peace-keeping operations in order to take into account the humanitarian component contained in these operations. We agree, of course, that so-called complex emergencies which include military interventions and peace-keeping operations should be the subject of the attention of the General Assembly. We believe, however, that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should operate in accordance with the mandate conferred upon it by resolution 46/182, and in particular the need to ensure that the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality are

strictly observed. We believe that all victims of disasters, be they natural or man-made, deserve to be assisted by the international community in a generous and timely manner in keeping with the spirit of international humanitarian law.

Another important tool provided to the United Nations by resolution 46/182 is the consolidated appeals mechanism. We are pleased that the inter-agency, consolidated appeals have progressively become more integrated and comprehensive. We welcome the increased involvement of non-governmental organizations at the field level in the appeals process and, in that regard, would wish to commend the Government of Sweden for its assistance in the creation of a United Nations Fund to facilitate non-governmental organizations' activities in this area. We also call on the donor community to respond in a more timely manner to the consolidated appeals, particularly as we note the increasing shortfall between funding requirements and funding actually received. We are also concerned over the general pattern of under-funding of non-food requirements, as well as the shortage of untied food resources. These are problems which continue to persist, as we pointed out in our statement before the Assembly last year.

As the report of the Secretary-General shows, utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) by the United Nations agencies has been increasing quite rapidly. In accordance with resolution 46/182, the Fund was established at a level of \$50 million and has so far disbursed some \$103 million, of which \$76 million has been reimbursed. The particular usefulness of the Fund has been recognized by all, particularly the operational agencies themselves. The need for a substantial increase in the resources of the Fund has become more imperative, as has the need to preserve its revolving nature, particularly through timely reimbursement from the agencies.

Zimbabwe attaches great importance to the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development. We believe that there is a close relationship between emergency operations and the development process, and that humanitarian assistance should be placed firmly in the developmental context. In this regard, we fully support the view that the United Nations agencies and the donor community, while providing emergency assistance, should also focus on the rehabilitation and long-term development needs of disaster-stricken countries.

Mr. Lukabu Khabouji N'zaji (Zaire) (*interpretation from French*): I should like most sincerely to thank the Secretary-General for his very concise report submitted to us under agenda item 37, which we are now discussing. By the same token, I should like to commend the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Hansen, for the praiseworthy initiatives he has taken in order to come to the assistance of those peoples and regions in distress.

My statement will concentrate on sub-item (g) of agenda item 37, entitled "Special assistance to countries receiving refugees from Rwanda". The Chairman of the African Group this morning very eloquently introduced to the Assembly draft resolution A/49/L.17/Rev.1, and I am grateful to him for that.

We would like to express our gratitude to all those countries that have declared their intention to join us as sponsors of this draft resolution but which have not been able to do so in practice owing to lack of time. We would also like to convey our thanks to the European Union, which has helped us to improve upon the text, and we hope that a new version that takes account of these remarks will be available when the draft resolution comes up for adoption.

I should like now to turn to the concerns addressed in the draft resolution before the Assembly. On 5 October last, speaking from this rostrum, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Zaire, His Excellency Mr. Kengo Wa Dondo, expressed the main concerns of the host countries for Rwandese refugees when he said:

"Millions of Rwandese left their country and took refuge in neighbouring countries. This mass exodus caused immeasurable damage and created extremely serious social and economic imbalances in those countries ... The little city of Goma, with a normal population of 200,000, on 14 June alone took in 10,000 refugees a minute. The modern world has never seen such an uprooting of population.

"The effects of such a situation could only be tragic: the swamping of infrastructures, the re-emergence of endemic disease, housing shortages, the devastation of crops, environmental destruction, disputes among people living in close quarters, insecurity, and countless other examples." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 18th meeting, p. 15*).

He added:

"The current situation in countries bordering on Rwanda meets all the preconditions for preventive intervention by the international community." (*ibid.*, p. 16)

That is why, aware of the difficulties encountered by the countries hosting refugees in meeting the needs of their local populations, we have introduced this sub-item, so as to emphasize the special nature of the situation faced by these countries. Through the draft resolution, we express our gratitude to the international community for what it has done, and continues to do, for refugees. However, it should not forget the local populations, which, in the most tragic hours of the Rwandese drama, when international assistance was being organized, themselves shared everything they had with their Rwandese brothers and sisters. Now that they themselves are now also needy, they deserve particular attention from the international community. Their crops have been either destroyed or harvested without any replacement; their cupboards are empty; famine is near; and epidemics have decimated the ranks of both refugees and the local populations, who have given all they had to their Rwandese brothers and sisters, including their last remaining spare beds. We ask the General Assembly to recall that these are the least developed of the developing countries whose infrastructures could never absorb such a human tide.

We express our deepest gratitude to all the countries and humanitarian organizations that have helped, and continue to help, my country, Zaire, to shoulder the burden of this responsibility that has been imposed on it by history and geography. We would like to emphasize that special and increased assistance should be given to Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and Zaire so as to enable them to restore basic services in the areas hosting refugees.

In conclusion, I should like, as Chairman of the Group of African States, to request members to adopt by consensus the draft resolution introduced this morning — one which is strictly humanitarian.

Mr. Katende (Uganda): I have the honour to make the following statement of behalf of Ambassador Kamunanwire, Permanent Representative of Uganda.

The cluster of items on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance to individual countries or regions, is of

significant interest to my delegation. I join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for all his comprehensive reports under consideration. My delegation supports the statement made by the Chairman of the Group of 77, who spoke on our behalf.

Issues of natural disasters, special programme assistance to distressed countries and issues of emergency humanitarian assistance are indeed one of today's greatest challenges to the United Nations and the international community, both in scale and diversity. In the case of my country, as we grapple with the many manifestations of socio-economic development, we continue to experience impediments as a result of our limited capacity to cope with a multitude of exogenous adverse factors. Uganda has one of the lowest per-capita incomes of the developing countries, and by all accounts we experience one of the lowest standards of living. The excruciating external indebtedness, *inter alia*, remains a major impediment to our development. Debt servicing alone is estimated at over 60 per cent of export receipts.

Other indicators point to a complex situation. In the area of natural disasters, Uganda experienced at the beginning of this year a major earthquake in the south-western part of the country. The earthquake, which measured 5.9 on the Richter scale, claimed a number of lives and destroyed property, including public infrastructure. Our lakes, including the second-largest freshwater mass in the world — Lake Victoria — are being threatened by the encroaching water hyacinth. The plant is progressively engulfing the lakes to the extent that the survival of marine life and of the fishing industry and water navigation in the subregion are at stake. Some of that marine life, especially in Lake Victoria, is on the list of endangered species.

The question of refugees and displaced persons presents yet another disaster of a different kind, which demands new and more innovative responses. Despite our economic difficulties, Uganda continues to receive and host a large number of refugees. This has meant a competition for already scarce resources between the refugees and the local populations. The influx of refugees has also had an effect on the environment as they fend for sources of energy, shelter and food. In this light, it is our view that the scope of humanitarian assistance should be widened to address the problems posed for the host populations.

All the above problems and others are not unique to Uganda. As has been alluded to in this Assembly, these predicaments are shared by many developing countries,

especially those in Africa. Therefore, as we express appreciation for all the bilateral and multilateral assistance being extended to us in the many areas of economic and emergency activities, we continue to count on the larger international community in complementing our efforts.

Emergency assistance need not be a form of support designed to last forever. Of paramount importance is economic assistance that should enable greater economic advances by creating development-friendly framework conditions and the unlimited possibility for people to develop themselves. The huge organizational flaws of multilateral cooperation make radical reform urgently necessary. The agencies of the United Nations dealing with emergencies and development cooperation need to be streamlined not only to achieve more efficiency but also to cut back a proliferating bureaucracy. The money saved should be used for programme activities.

In all the related decisions, the inputs of the affected countries or regions are pertinent. Multilateral cooperation should therefore make greater use of local know-how in the planning and implementation of programmes and projects. The involvement of local experts and recipient Governments in project responsibility leads to more efficiency and sustainability, as well as being cost-effective.

The need for greater commitment in financing multilateral cooperation in emergency humanitarian assistance and the contribution to development is equally crucial. Inadequate funding often renders the successful implementation of projects difficult. My delegation notes the current imbalances in resource flows between peace-keeping activities by the United Nations on the one hand and humanitarian aid, disaster relief and development activities on the other. The United Nations spends far more for peace-keeping operations than it does for development assistance. This trend means losing sight of the fact that a number of conflicts have roots in socio-economic impoverishment.

If my delegation attaches great importance to special economic assistance and focused emergency responsiveness for wider self-propelling development, it is because perpetual stopgap measures in the end undermine the consolidation of the continuum to economic recovery and reconstruction in weak economies. What is required are adequate economic-resource mobilization and flows, as well as strengthened internal capacities for sustainable development.

Uganda is one of the countries that invoked Article 50 of the United Nations Charter as a result of implementing sanctions imposed against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). As stated in the Secretary General's report in document A/49/356, my country requested assistance related to the interruption of a contract that had been concluded in 1987 between the Government of Uganda and a private Yugoslav firm, Energoprojekt, for the construction of the Mityana-Fort Portal road in western Uganda. At the time of the imposition of the sanctions, the road construction project had been halfway completed at Mubende, where it is still stalled due to non-payment under the sanctions regime. Given the vital importance of the road to Uganda's economy, the interruption of the project has delayed the improvement that we had intended. Construction remains at a halt, with the resultant associated costs, including the maintenance of idle machinery, consultancy services and litigation expenses.

My delegation notes that the Security Council, its Committee established pursuant to resolution 724 (1991) and its Working Group on Article 50 remain seized of the matter. We express appreciation for all the existing mechanisms and ongoing programmes of technical and financial assistance in the country, at the bilateral and multilateral levels. However, we feel strongly that the implementation of Article 50 remains vague. It should be effectively implemented. Therefore, to overcome any ambiguities, it is important that there be a mechanism in the United Nations to address the spirit of Article 50 effectively and systematically. In this regard, current discussions on the issue should be further encouraged, including discussion of a well-established methodology for the assessment of the economic impact of sanctions on affected countries.

Whereas special assistance measures have indirect positive effects, they are not directly aimed at mitigating the negative consequences of the sanctions. Moreover, existing programmes, in the case of my country, are being undertaken within a pool of other priorities. It is thus difficult for us to notice whether there is any substantial difference in the extent to which the effects of the sanctions are being mitigated.

Regarding Uganda's project stalled as a result of sanctions, we continue to find it difficult to get new contractors on similar terms, a problem which compounds the ongoing costs already mentioned. Since it is a priority project aimed at mitigating the larger economic hardships of people in a productive part of the country, our humble

appeal is that urgent additional assistance be focused on the project itself. In this respect, we commend the Economic Commission for Africa for sending an evaluation team to Uganda earlier this year with a view to recommending alternative sources of funding. We look forward to a favourable report. Equally, my country welcomes the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development Consultative Group meetings scheduled for 1995 and is optimistic that additional and specifically focused resources to mitigate the losses and costs suffered as a result of sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will be mobilized.

In conclusion, my delegation has co-sponsored a number of draft resolutions on the item under consideration. It is our hope that they will be adopted by consensus and implemented accordingly, including their wider elements.

Mr. Maycock (Barbados): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 12 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which are Members of the United Nations — namely, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and my own country, Barbados — as well as on behalf of Suriname, on agenda item 37, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance."

The CARICOM countries and Suriname thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive information provided on sub-item (a) in documents A/49/177 and Add 1. These reports are testimony to the commendable progress that has been made, in increasingly challenging circumstances, to strengthen coordination and cooperation between the organizations of the United Nations system and other governmental and non-governmental partners in the area of humanitarian assistance. In particular, we welcome the progressive evolution of the principal policy-coordination mechanism, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, as well as the consolidated appeals process and the Central Emergency Revolving Fund. We have taken careful note of the Standing Committee's recommendation for an increase in the size of the Fund to better enable it to fulfil its purpose and of the intention to conduct additional consultations with all parties concerned in this regard.

Our Governments acknowledge with considerable interest the important ongoing work in database and

information compilation in a variety of critical areas, including the International Emergency Readiness and Response Information System, the Humanitarian Early Warning System, the de-mining database and the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities. We know from first-hand experience the vital role that timely and accurate information plays at all stages of a humanitarian emergency, and we anticipate the development of close collaboration between the United Nations and our Governments in this regard in areas relevant to our own circumstances.

The significant number of individual country and regional reports which have been presented to us under other sub-items in this cluster demonstrate in graphic terms the overwhelming proportions of the humanitarian tragedy now facing the international community. In a few situations, commendable progress has been made, which is deserving of our sustained support; this is true of the efforts to consolidate peace and democracy in Central America. But, in overall terms, humanitarian crises, and in particular those classified as complex humanitarian emergencies, are increasing at an alarming rate. Their scope and magnitude have severely taxed the response capacities of the United Nations system, of concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and of the international community as a whole. War and civil strife continue to produce catastrophic suffering and displacement for millions of innocent civilians worldwide and to generate the need for urgent and large-scale humanitarian assistance. Meanwhile, the delivery of such assistance remains fraught with serious problems relating to access, security and resource constraints. The dedicated United Nations and international and non-governmental personnel that puts its life at risk on a daily basis to respond to this growing human tragedy deserves our recognition and support. For we must remind ourselves that it is frequently the efforts of that personnel, and not those of the cloistered negotiators in these halls, which redeem the image of the United Nations in the public's eye and provide its firmest base of support among the citizens of the world.

The peaceful democracies of the Caribbean have happily been spared the ravages of war and major civil strife. Geography, however, has exposed some of us indirectly to its consequences, as accidental havens for the desperate exodus of displaced and persecuted persons from neighbouring shores. In the Bahamas, for example, 40,000 of the region's dispossessed, the majority originating from Haiti, are now present in its territory. While these numbers may appear small in terms of the overall global

phenomenon, they in fact represent, in the case of the Bahamas, virtually one-fifth of the total population, making their impact perhaps more devastating, proportionately, to the affected country. With negligible assistance or recognition from the international community, the Bahamas, a small island developing State, has had to make humanitarian provisions for these migrants, with heavy adverse effects on its own economic and social development efforts.

The sister State of Belize is similarly affected. Belize as a haven of tranquillity on the Central American mainland was sought as refuge by some 30,000 refugees and displaced persons fleeing conflict in a once turbulent region. This tremendous influx of immigrants now constitutes some 10 to 15 per cent of the population, resulting in severe strain on the provision of social services and on the infrastructure.

The central location of Jamaica has also exposed that country to this phenomenon and engendered a humanitarian response. Earlier this year, at the height of the exodus of Haitian boat people, the Government of Jamaica, out of humanitarian concern for their plight, signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of the United States to allow for the operation of a processing facility within Jamaica's territorial waters. It also took action, in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and with assistance from local humanitarian organizations and concerned nationals, to provide humanitarian assistance, including shelter, food, clothing and academic and vocational training, to those Haitians who had sought refuge within the country. Suriname has also honoured a request to provide a temporary safe haven for Haitian refugees and, to this end, has taken the necessary steps, in close cooperation with national and international humanitarian organizations.

The recent positive developments in Haiti leading to the restoration of President Aristide have created favourable conditions for the return of the Haitians to their homeland, and efforts in this regard are being undertaken by the affected Governments together with the UNHCR.

The CARICOM countries and Suriname consider it important to reiterate the sentiment expressed by the Secretary-General in his report last year, when he reminded us that droughts, floods, earthquakes and cyclones are just as destructive for communities and

settlements as wars and civil confrontation. The statistics in this year's report give us no cause for comfort, for they reveal that a total number of 68 natural disasters occurred in 1993, causing death to thousands and homelessness to millions, and billions of dollars in economic losses. The vast majority of countries affected were from the developing world, and virtually a third of them were island developing countries.

The extreme vulnerability of the Caribbean to natural disasters is demonstrated in the mounting catalogue of hurricanes, storms, floods, landslides and droughts that leave their annual trail of misery throughout our region. 1994 has been a year of extremes in this regard. On the one hand, we have experienced the most severe drought to visit the Caribbean in decades, which has had a significant adverse impact on the agricultural sectors of many of our countries and has caused a serious strain on already limited water resources. On the other hand, the period of drought has been followed in close succession by two tropical storms, "Debby" and "Gordon", which caused widespread damage, respectively, in Saint Lucia and in Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the Cayman Islands. In Saint Lucia tropical storm "Debby" caused four deaths and rendered 600 homeless, while the severe flooding and landslides it produced caused extensive infrastructural damage, particularly to roads, bridges and hospitals, and to the water distribution network. The agricultural, fisheries and forestry sectors were also seriously affected, with 58 per cent of the banana and 80 per cent of the coconut crops — both major foreign exchange earners — destroyed, and it is estimated that 12 to 18 months will be required to return to pre-disaster levels of production. High winds and torrential rains from tropical storm "Gordon" caused severe flooding and landslides in the affected countries and several hundred deaths, over 300 of them in Haiti, where 100,000 people were affected; damage assessments are still being compiled.

It is experiences like those which have led our region to give priority attention to the strengthening of national and regional institutions and mechanisms aimed at increasing the capabilities of our disaster-prone countries in preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery. A comprehensive blueprint for action in this regard is provided in chapter II of the Programme of Action negotiated in Barbados in May this year by the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, through which the international community gave special recognition to the extreme vulnerability of small island developing States to the effects of natural and environmental disasters. Strong commitment

and support at the international level, and by the United Nations agencies operating in the humanitarian assistance fields, are indispensable to the successful implementation of the important actions recommended in that chapter to address the special needs of this group of countries.

The CARICOM member States and Suriname are gratified that the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, held in Yokohama in May this year, took account of the recommendations of the Barbados Programme of Action, and accorded special consideration in the Yokohama Strategy to the particular situation of small island developing States. Our Governments participated actively in the World Conference and are fully supportive of its outcomes, as we are of the goals and activities of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. The issues these complementary activities have sought to highlight are of direct relevance to the situations we face in the Caribbean region, and we look forward to cooperating closely with the Decade's secretariat in devising relevant programmes in respect of our region on the basis of the Yokohama Strategy.

CARICOM countries have a well-established tradition of regional cooperation in the area of disaster preparedness and response, and we therefore welcome the emphasis given in the Yokohama documents to the strengthening of subregional and regional centres for disaster reduction and prevention, and to the assigning of high priority and special support to activities and programmes at the subregional and regional levels in order to promote cooperation between countries exposed to the same risks.

In this regard, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), established by the Caribbean Community in 1991, is a tangible demonstration of our subregion's efforts to strengthen our institutional capacity for disaster management and response. CDERA has developed close links of cooperation with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its Resident Coordinator in Barbados, who chairs the Eastern Caribbean Disaster Donor Group, as well as with the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. It is, however, felt that the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and CDERA would further enhance that cooperation, as would the deployment by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of a subregional presence in the Caribbean.

The United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme has proved useful to the Caribbean, but would benefit further from the commitment of resources for the implementation of agreed action plans and for recommended follow-up of initial activities. Similarly, the UNDP regional project, the Disaster Emergency Response and Management System, is viewed by Caribbean Governments as an important effort at capacity-building in those two critical areas, and it is hoped that the approved funding to implement this project will be released at the earliest possible opportunity.

The CARICOM member States and Suriname wish to record their appreciation for the contributions made by a number of United Nations and regional agencies, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations in support of our own efforts to develop a comprehensive disaster management infrastructure to serve the countries of the subregion. The assistance of the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), the Organization of American States and the Pan American Health Organization have been of considerable significance in this context. The Pan American Health Organization in particular has been collaborating closely with regional Governments since 1977, and has provided important advisory health services in the humanitarian field, as well as contributing to the capacity-building needs of the region through seminars, training workshops and public awareness efforts, and through the introduction of its Supply Management Project, designed to sort, classify and record an inventory of the large quantities of relief supplies received in post-disaster situations. A memorandum of understanding between the Pan American Health Organization and CDERA formalizes its designation as the health disaster response adviser to CDERA.

The coordinating role of CDERA in regional disaster management and response was successfully activated again this year in reaction to the onslaught of tropical storms "Debby" and "Gordon". Several important lessons were learned which will contribute to the strengthening of future procedures. In addition, over the past year CDERA has worked to refine its Relief Supply Tracking System, a software package introduced to participating States in 1993, and has coordinated several important activities in community disaster planning, shelter management, and enhancement of the development of disaster exercises and simulation capability within member States. Caribbean Governments wish to record their appreciation for the funding of and support for these activities provided in particular by the Canadian International Development

Agency through its International Humanitarian Assistance Programme, and by the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development. Regional Red Cross societies, as well as the community of non-governmental organizations, and in particular the Caribbean Conference of Churches, Caritas and Catholic Relief Services, have each played an important part in these activities.

The CARICOM member States reiterate the need for international humanitarian policies to emphasize and provide adequately for the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development if long-term solutions are to be found. We are also convinced, from our own direct experience, that one of the priority objectives of these policies should be the decentralization of response strategies through the strengthening of institutional disaster-management capabilities at the local, national and subregional levels. This is the most effective way to guard against the creation of a syndrome of dependency on Northern expertise and management skills. The traditional knowledge and experiences of the populations and Governments in disaster-prone countries constitute a vital resource which must be more effectively developed and utilized.

Mr. Kudryavtsev (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): It is natural for humanitarian emergency assistance to have moved into the forefront of United Nations activities. First of all, the United Nations cannot remain aloof in the face of serious humanitarian crises — whose number, unfortunately, is by no means dropping.

Secondly, there are genuine advantages in having the United Nations carry out and coordinate such operations, which involve many parties: donor countries, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and, of course, the affected countries themselves. Coordination is necessary also to ensure effective utilization of the resources available for these purposes, which are growing in volume.

General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 48/57 and the conclusions agreed upon at the 1993 summer session of the Economic and Social Council have identified the main problem areas and a framework for joint action, including ensuring the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance, organizing efficient field coordination, establishing a rational division of labour and a close relationship among bilateral and multilateral donors, and

making use of flexible systems for financing humanitarian operations.

We are pleased to note that those decisions, and the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/49/177 and Corr.1) are now gradually, but genuinely, being implemented. The work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has picked up speed and is growing more productive, thanks in large part to the dynamic personal efforts of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen. Indeed, with respect to this sphere of the activities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Hansen's Department in general appears to have got its second wind, as have the activities themselves.

The work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee is improving, but we need greater transparency in that work, for example through regular briefings on the results of the Standing Committee's meetings and of working meetings between representatives of the Committee and of interested States.

We must draw attention again to the longer-term tasks of the United Nations in this area mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General. They primarily involve further work on critically important issues such as protection of humanitarian mandates in conflict situations; ensuring unimpeded access to people in need; efficient demobilization and reintegration of former combatants into civilian life; facilitating the return of displaced persons; and de-mining. We are in favour of moving as quickly as possible to implement measures to resolve these problems.

Sometimes questions relating to unimpeded access for humanitarian emergency assistance get mixed up with sanctions introduced by the Security Council. We believe that the problem of the impact of sanctions on the civilian population deserves a thorough analysis. In this connection, we await with interest the report being prepared by the Inter-Agency Task Force which we believe should *inter alia* review the legal basis necessary for exempting from sanctions the most vulnerable groups in society. We think it important to establish a system for consultations which would make it possible to apprise the Security Council in good time of the humanitarian consequences of the introduction of sanctions. This would in itself ensure a more balanced approach to the introduction of phased lifting of sanctions where there are grounds for this. We believe that these considerations should be taken into account in the work of the relevant sanctions Committees

of the Security Council, and indeed in the Security Council itself.

In general, it would seem to us that there is a need to draft a comprehensive international strategy for dealing with humanitarian crises, making use of work already done in this area, work that is reflected in the Agenda for Peace and also in the basic parameters of the Agenda for Development. Elements of such a strategy could include ensuring the delivery of humanitarian relief assistance in disaster areas before the deployment of the full-scale humanitarian operation; measures to house refugees and displaced persons; and reconstruction and rehabilitation within the context of ensuring long-term development — that is, the continuum aspect. In this connection, we could also look at the outcome of the Yokohama World Conference, which we are sure the General Assembly will endorse and support.

We hope that at this session new impetus will be given to another important initiative to step up the efforts of the United Nations to deal with humanitarian crises. I refer to Argentina's proposal to establish a network of national volunteers for rapid humanitarian response — the "white helmets". The Russian delegation is ready to promote a swift agreement on the basic parameters of this initiative and to work towards its practical implementation.

In this connection, of particular importance is the very recent decision by the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Yeltsin, to establish in Russia a national unit for emergency humanitarian response and an air and land mobile emergency reserve unit. These units would be intended for use within the country and also, by agreement with other countries and international organizations, beyond our borders.

Russia participates actively in international efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in emergency situations. The Russian federal budget for 1994 includes a special reserve of about \$1.5 million for this purpose. In addition, this year the Government by special decision allocated about \$15 million to buy and deliver humanitarian assistance for countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and other foreign countries. In 1994 Russia provided humanitarian assistance to the people of the Republics of the former Yugoslavia and to Tanzania and Rwanda in regions afflicted by bloody civil conflict. We also provided assistance to Moldova, Madagascar and China following natural disasters from which these countries suffered. We

are also actively involved in cooperating with agencies within the United Nations system in humanitarian operations in a number of countries of the trans-Caucasus and in Tajikistan.

The volume and level of Russia's involvement in humanitarian assistance makes our country one of the major donors in this area. This in turn explains our legitimate interest in participating in the relevant mechanisms both inside and outside the United Nations system.

Before concluding, I wish to say a few words about the work of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund. We support the views expressed by the Secretary-General in document A/49/177/Add.1 on enhancing the effectiveness of the functioning of the Fund and mobilizing the necessary resources. In this connection, I am particularly pleased to be able to say that the President of the Russian Federation has decided that Russia will contribute \$250,000 to this Fund. In our continuing difficult internal economic circumstances, that is, I believe, further proof of Russia's commitment to cooperate in this important area of United Nations activities.

In concluding my statement I should like to express the hope that the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will take account of the problems encountered in respect of consultations and in pursuance of the General Assembly resolution.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): On behalf of the Republic of Korea delegation, I should like to commend Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for their leadership role in providing a timely and effective response by the United Nations and the international community to natural and man-made disasters. We would also like to pay our highest respect to all the field personnel of relief agencies who have lost their lives while carrying out the task of humanitarian assistance.

Three years ago the General Assembly adopted its landmark resolution 46/182 to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system in coordinating emergency humanitarian assistance. Since then the world has witnessed an alarming increase in humanitarian crises, which has significantly increased the demands placed upon the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to more than 30 million people world wide.

Mr. Ansari (India), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Regrettably, while natural disasters continue to threaten mankind, man-made disasters have dramatically increased and stand to thwart our efforts to ensure human security. For the millions of innocent people in such countries as Rwanda, the Sudan and Somalia, humanitarian assistance has literally become a matter of life and death. In particular, the catastrophic events that took place in Rwanda this year are among the greatest human tragedies in recent history.

Much of the credit for the success of humanitarian activities in such places as Somalia and the former Yugoslavia can be attributed to the strong coordinating role which the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has played as a focal point of the United Nations system. Therefore, my delegation is of the view that the leadership role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be duly recognized and further strengthened in the future.

Indeed, good coordination is the key to achieving real results in humanitarian activities and must be maintained at and among the field, interdepartmental and interagency levels. In particular, coordination among the political, peace-keeping and humanitarian departments of the United Nations is crucial in conflict situations. Interdepartmental coordination must be enhanced so as to secure access to populations in need of assistance, improve the security of relief personnel and find a lasting solution to the root causes of many complex emergencies. In this context, my delegation welcomes and fully supports the coordination measures noted in the Secretary-General's report (A/49/177 and Corr.1 and Add.1).

It is now clear that in order to respond successfully to man-made disasters the United Nations must actively take preventive and preparatory measures, such as preventive diplomacy and contingency planning. This is also true for natural disasters, as reflected in the Yokohama Message, adopted at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held last May. Considering the fact that these measures can be taken only through the establishment of a reliable early-warning system, the delegation of the Republic of Korea would like to commend the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for initiating the International Emergency Readiness and Response Information System and for working to establish a Humanitarian Early Warning System. In addition, my delegation would like to emphasize that the strengthening of regional early-warning networks should be duly considered. Building such networks, particularly

in vulnerable regions, would significantly enhance the United Nations capacity to cope with emergencies.

Just as it is crucial to enhance those measures, it is also crucial that the United Nations, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and UNDP, in particular, plan and implement their relief activities in the context of a continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development. Only with such a continuum of action can the affected countries develop successfully into more stable societies and achieve sustainable development, which is a key to ensuring international peace and security.

In the light of the increasing number and magnitude of disasters, it is imperative to have a sound financial system and strategy. In order to respond promptly and effectively to humanitarian crises, particularly at the early stage of emergencies, the relief agencies must have adequate financial resources available. In this regard, my delegation supports the recommendation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs that the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) should be expanded and that the donor base should be broadened through embracing new partners. It is crucial that all members of the global family contribute to this noble cause in a spirit of cooperation and genuine partnership.

Another financial mechanism, the consolidated appeal process, also merits our attention. My delegation considers the consolidated appeal process to be, not only a valuable financial mechanism, but also an important instrument for coordination among relief agencies and recipient countries. And, considering the importance of this mechanism for the humanitarian activities of the United Nations, my delegation wishes to emphasize the responsibility of donors to respond to appeals and fulfil their commitments promptly and in full.

Finally, in view of the dangerous and unstable situation in which relief personnel often carry out their duties, my delegation would like to emphasize once again the importance of ensuring the safety of those courageous men and women; we call for strengthened legal and other necessary measures to ensure their protection.

Mr. Thahim (Pakistan): The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has the most challenging task of dealing with a plethora of emergencies: both man-made and natural disasters. The demands are many and the resources limited. Within its limited resources, the Department has been able to reach out and to provide assistance in hot-spots and disaster-ravaged areas all over the world. Since the

Department of Humanitarian Affairs represents one of the most visible arms of the United Nations, it is subject to media attention and is therefore vulnerable.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen, for his personal commitment to the tasks given to his Department. We have known Mr. Hansen over the years for his energy, innovative spirit and ability to deliver. We are confident that his forthright manner will help the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in fulfilling the role envisaged for it in General Assembly resolution 46/182.

The proliferation of emergencies over the past few years, especially man-made disasters caused by civil strife, underscores the importance of the role the United Nations must play in preventive diplomacy and socio-economic development. We are convinced that some of the present-day disasters could have been averted if there had been a greater resort to the instruments of negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement as per Chapter VI of the Charter. Undoubtedly the United Nations faces a crisis of excessive expectations, but it is the only organization that can offer hope to nations and peoples locked in strife and overcome by turmoil. And it must again be emphasized that it is through sincere implementation of the decisions of the United Nations that we can expect, in the words of the Charter, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and thus fulfil the purposes for which the United Nations was established.

The chaos and turmoil which have affected so many parts of the developing world in recent years also underline the vital importance of promoting economic and social development as a means of averting humanitarian emergencies and of overcoming such calamities when they happen. Without development, there is a danger that civil order and peace will disappear in many parts of the world. Without development, many of the current emergencies may become even more prolonged and cruel.

The dire need behind the creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was to ensure the coordination of assistance provided by all organizations involved in emergencies. The Department's activities are being undertaken in conformity with the Guiding Principles contained in the annex to resolution 46/182. The coordination role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in complex emergencies, as approved by the

Inter-Agency Standing Committee through the establishment of disaster-management teams and a clear division of labour, will ensure that the United Nations is able to fulfil its role of immediate response.

It is recognized that while resolution 46/182 delegates to the Resident Coordinator the coordination of humanitarian assistance activities, there is a need for humanitarian assistance coordinators in some complex emergency situations. The leadership provided by such coordinators in emergencies in the recent past has proved to be extremely effective. The decisions of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the designation of humanitarian assistance coordinators should be limited to situations in which the Resident Coordinator is not in place or in which the magnitude of the emergency requires some special expertise or the political acumen of an especially designated senior official.

Since its launching, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund has been a vital mechanism for the provision of immediate financial assistance for emergencies pending the preparation of a consolidated appeal and the response to it. It is therefore essential that the Fund continue to receive contributions and retain its revolving nature. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs should be allowed complete flexibility in the disbursement of the Fund's resources for effective damage-control in the first 48 hours of an emergency, the time when most lives are lost. While the usefulness of the Fund is recognized, it is disconcerting that, despite all the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, it has been unable to increase the overall levels of resources of the Fund to meet the increasing demands of new emergencies. We support the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report for an increase in the size of the Fund and urge all donors to contribute to it.

With regard to item 37 (b), my delegation notes with appreciation the efforts made by the Secretary-General towards the implementation of resolution 48/208, entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan". The special mission led by Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri deserves our congratulations for its work. The report of the special mission gives important insight into the situation prevailing in Afghanistan.

The destruction in Afghanistan caused by 14 years of a cruel war and by the intensification of the fighting in Kabul and elsewhere in the country since January 1994 is difficult to imagine. Of a population of 15 million, over 6

million fled the country during the war and sought refuge mainly in Iran, Pakistan and other parts of the world. A further 2.5 million were internally displaced. Over 1 million men and 250,000 women and children died in the war. At present, nearly 200,000 people are internally displaced in camps near Jalalabad, bracing for a severe winter. The magnitude of this human suffering is without precedent.

Now that the foreign occupants have left, it is regrettable that the world's attention seems to be turned elsewhere. It has been left to the brave people of Afghanistan to address the task of rehabilitation and national reconstruction. This task is monumental. The special mission found a strong feeling among Afghans that:

"the international community and the United Nations had deserted Afghanistan for the past two years."
(A/49/208, para. 23 (g))

The report of the special mission points out that the effect of the war can be felt throughout the country, with instability spreading to various regions. The social fabric and economic life of Afghanistan have been devastated; institutions and physical infrastructure have been completely destroyed. Health, education and other services are virtually inoperative. Unemployment, poverty, deprivation and disease afflict most of Afghanistan's people, of whom 15 per cent are either displaced, homeless or destitute in the middle of a long and difficult winter.

The presence of land-mines has been indicated as one of the major obstacles to the successful repatriation of the Afghan refugees. Nearly 400,000 people have been disabled, mainly by land-mines, 10 million of which have reportedly been laid in Afghanistan. The effect of these mines on the civilian population, especially on small children, is heart-rending. The mine-clearance programme of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is therefore of critical importance not only to the personal security of the Afghan returnees, but also to the rapid return of refugees and the revival of local economies in Afghanistan. We would urge the donor community to contribute generously to this programme.

It is evident from the consolidated appeal launched by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs a few weeks ago that there is an urgent need for humanitarian rehabilitation assistance to Afghanistan. The nations of the world invested heavily in the long and bloody conflict

in Afghanistan. The outcome of this war was heralded as a triumph for the "free world". It would be tragic if the Afghan nation, battered and destroyed, were now left to fend for itself. The world community is morally obligated to respond with generosity to the plight of Afghanistan.

Pakistan sincerely hopes that the international community will respond in a swift and decisive manner to the consolidated appeal. The world cannot watch with folded hands the suffering and devastation of Afghanistan. The peoples of the world must display solidarity with the brave people of Afghanistan as they struggle to heal the wounds of a most devastating war.

Mr. Bull (Liberia): I should like, on behalf of the Liberian delegation, to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report (A/49/177) on the activities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. I also welcome his report in document A/49/177/Add.1 of 1 November 1994, which was submitted pursuant to the General Assembly's request to him to provide recommendations for the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster-relief assistance of the United Nations.

Since the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was established, it has continued to play a significant role in coordinating the delivery of emergency assistance to peoples in difficult circumstances worldwide, particularly the innocent victims of civil conflicts and other disasters. The growing collaboration between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and other United Nations agencies and international organizations has improved the efficiency of the United Nations in responding to humanitarian emergencies. I should therefore like to congratulate Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen and members of his staff on this important achievement. The further implementation of recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report to which I have referred should prove to be most helpful and deserves the General Assembly's endorsement.

It is a matter of growing concern that a substantial portion of United Nations resources is being utilized not to further development and cooperation among Member States, as envisaged in the United Nations Charter, but, rather, to finance peace-keeping operations and to address humanitarian emergencies, many of which result from civil conflicts.

As the United Nations approaches its half-century of existence, collective action must be taken to reverse this trend, which poses a serious threat to a more peaceful world order. In this regard, it is perhaps only when

collective action is taken to impose some penalties that the perpetrators of man-made disasters and other conflicts will be deterred from such activities, which, as a moral imperative, have continued to claim the attention of the United Nations.

For nearly five years now the people of Liberia have been forced against their will to live in deprivation and fear as a result of a senseless war. In spite of the people's desire to live in peace and rebuild their lives, the warring factions, particularly their warlords, with the support of some external forces, persist in their efforts to achieve political power by force of arms. The war has destroyed the country's basic infrastructure, displaced over 1 million inhabitants internally and forced over 700,000 to become refugees in neighbouring countries.

The Secretary-General's report in document A/49/466 of 7 October 1994, "Assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia," is therefore timely. The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the civil crisis, the various peace initiatives and the efforts of the United Nations to respond to the humanitarian needs arising from the devastating war. It also identifies areas in which the international community could be helpful by complementing the national efforts to undertake the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country when the guns are silenced.

In recognition of the fact that a political settlement offers the only durable solution to the conflict, the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States, the President of Ghana, convened another meeting two days ago in Accra to narrow the differences among the warring factions. It is to be hoped that the full participation of the National Transitional Government and other concerned groups will facilitate an agreement acceptable to all sides. The parties to the conflict must realize the futility of pursuing the use of force to achieve political ends and must accede to the wishes of the Liberian people to be allowed freely to elect their leaders. They must also realize that the goodwill and support of our African brothers, as well as of the international community, are not unlimited. Liberians must accept the reality that the future course our country takes will be determined by us.

A detailed plan for the reconstruction of Liberia is being prepared by the Liberian authorities which will outline the development goals and objectives and identify priority programmes requiring the assistance of donors. In the meantime, contributions to the Trust Fund for

Liberia are urgently required to enable the Economic Community of West African States to fulfil its mandate and to maintain troops provided by the Organization of African Unity.

The repatriation of Liberian refugees, the demobilization and rehabilitation of combatants and preparations for the holding of general and presidential elections are some of the priorities outlined in the draft resolution on Liberia (A/49/L.32), which was introduced this morning by the representative of Ghana in his capacity as Chairman of the African Group for the month of November. I wish to join him in requesting that the Assembly adopt the draft resolution unanimously. Its full implementation will ensure a more hopeful future for the people of Liberia.

May I take this opportunity to express the grateful appreciation of the people of Liberia for the cooperation and assistance the United Nations and friendly Governments and governmental and non-governmental organizations have continued to provide us as we seek a peaceful resolution of our conflict.

We commend the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen its coordination and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, which reaffirm our faith in the commitment of the Organization to promote and protect the welfare of all peoples in recognition of our common humanity.

Mr. Marrero (United States of America): We welcome the opportunity today to address the General Assembly on the all-too-timely subject of humanitarian assistance.

Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182, the international community has faced over 100 sudden natural disasters and over 25 complex socio-political emergencies. Tragically, a combination of man-made and natural disasters has created unprecedented demand for help by the United Nations in responding to humanitarian crises. Although there is much for the General Assembly and the United Nations as a whole to be proud of, there is also a pressing need for us to plan together to meet future challenges with greater efficiency and success.

There is an increasing linkage between peace-keeping and humanitarian operations. Purely humanitarian missions are declining in frequency. Rarer still are the peace-keeping missions that do not have humanitarian implications. Today, when one thinks of the provision of

United Nations humanitarian assistance one thinks of sending caravans of food through hostile roadblocks, flying medical supplies within range of enemy guns, or negotiating day by day for the right simply to save human lives.

It is no secret that the stabilizing and paralysing effects of the cold war have worn off, and pent-up pressures from past grievances have erupted, causing civil conflicts and strife of an alarming nature. Increasingly, the international community — many of us sitting in this very Hall today — has asked the United Nations to care for the victims. Thus, the demand for humanitarian assistance has grown many-fold, while the costs and complexities of providing assistance effectively have grown even more.

My Government's policy begins with the premise that we cannot and shall not remain aloof in the face of human suffering and despair. Indeed, we who sit here today have an obligation to ourselves and to our shared ideals as Members of the United Nations to do all we can to alleviate the pain of the desperate and the displaced. We also begin with the optimistic understanding that for every current crisis there is another crisis on the verge of being solved.

For example, the United Nations inter-agency appeal for Haiti, which is to be released soon, comprises projects and activities that will help Haitians to build an economically, politically and environmentally viable nation so that never again will they be driven to seek their future elsewhere. The Economic Emergency Relief Programme — a joint reconstruction and rehabilitation effort to be launched early next year by the United Nations Development Programme, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and USAID — is a logical extension of this appeal. Together, they address the important relief-to-development continuum that we all too often call for but seldom realize.

The experience of the last two years in responding to these emergencies has demonstrated the validity of resolution 46/182 in providing the framework for the coordination of United Nations relief assistance. Despite the fact that its resources have been spread thin by the growing wave of humanitarian emergencies, the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs has played a vital role in coordinating relief assistance worldwide. In particular, the United States recognizes the strong leadership of Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen and

the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, in responding to the crisis in Rwanda.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has coalesced into an effective and purposeful coordinating forum. The parties that participate in the Standing Committee have developed an understanding that it is up to them to work together to help solve the crises that so many of us may feel are unsolvable.

We cannot, however, as Governments, profess that we have all the answers. The problems we face demand a supreme effort of partnership between Governments, United Nations agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. This partnership must be multilateral in character — involving Governments in the affected regions as well as donors; local as well as international non-governmental organizations; and multilateral organizations at both the global and the regional levels.

The Central Emergency Revolving Fund has provided critical and necessary start-up funding to the relief agencies, and rapid response coordination capability to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Yet, further information on how those funds are used is sorely required if we are to convince ourselves of the need to expand the Central Emergency Revolving Fund. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in preparing consolidated appeals, should highlight the funds borrowed by the relevant agencies and should indicate which activities those funds supported. It should also emphasize the importance of reimbursing the Central Emergency Revolving Fund so that adequate funds are always available to respond to future emergencies.

We must not lose sight of the revolving nature of Central Emergency Revolving Fund expenditures or of the initial emergency needs that those expenditures support and the likelihood that donors will see the benefit of funding such activities when responding to appeals.

Member States must recognize that coordination activities are essential to the effective and comprehensive use of broader humanitarian assistance. We believe that a consistent source of funding for rapid-response coordination is not just desirable but necessary. We therefore strongly endorse the recommendation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for the continued use by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the interest earned by the Central Emergency Revolving Fund for funding rapid coordination arrangements in the field. We also

welcome the efforts of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in consulting with Member States on how to broaden the donor base. Such efforts should be supported and expanded.

We applaud the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for its work to ensure that the Emergency Relief Coordinator's designation or appointment of the humanitarian assistance coordinators is transparent and consistent with the spirit of General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 47/199. The need for swift and effective coordination at the field level requires nothing less.

Given this grave need and the scarcity of resources for field coordination, we must make certain that each dollar available is spent wisely and efficiently and in a coordinated and coherent manner. Unfortunately, wisdom, efficiency, coordination and coherence do not come about by accident. Effective and sustainable humanitarian assistance requires careful planning and consideration by all the players in the United Nations system. We have to pull together, not only to respond to emergencies but also to plan for them, prevent them, contain them and end them.

For this to happen, we have to adapt our institutions and procedures to the world as we find it today. And what we find is that the world does not conform to any bureaucratic structure or organizational chart. Today, crises that can be categorized solely as humanitarian or military or political are very rare. As a result, planning for humanitarian aid must include full consideration of security and other factors that may come into play when attempts to deliver aid are made.

At the same time, planning for peace-keeping and other security-related missions must take into account the humanitarian dimension. Turmoil and violence create refugees, cripple children, destroy villages and disrupt normal economic activity. This means that we must approach all these problems on an integrated basis. We must involve the Department of Humanitarian Affairs more closely in the planning of peace-keeping operations. Under-Secretary-General Hansen's recent reorganization of the Department addresses this challenge. We must support him in his efforts to further develop and strengthen the cooperation and coordination between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs.

Just as an integrated approach to crisis areas is important, so too is early intervention. Given the human stakes, it should be obvious that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In many cases, if we had only acted sooner, with a little more foresight and greater urgency, we could have saved many lives, avoided innumerable hardships and redirected millions of dollars to prevent or mitigate other disasters.

While preventive diplomacy is not always possible when it comes to foreseeable natural disasters we have the collective capacity to intervene early and to affect the result. That is why my Government is proud to announce the recent contribution of \$100,000 to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. This contribution will support the global implementation of the Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, which was held in Yokohama, Japan, last May. The Plan of Action is an important instrument as a means of enabling national Governments to incorporate disaster-reduction programmes into their development and environmental planning.

It is easy, of course, to talk about the importance of looking ahead, but it is not always easy to act. The urgent has a tendency to drive out the important, but given the scarcity of resources, we must do everything we can to find the resources and the wisdom to keep today's problems from becoming tomorrow's crises. But how do we do this? What does preventive diplomacy mean in this context?

The United Nations and all its agencies must be willing and able to pool data to provide early warning of an impending crisis. The United Nations response to the Southern African Drought Emergency (SADE) in 1992 was an example of how this process can work. Although this was a response to a natural disaster, there are lessons in it as to how the United Nations can — and must — deal with disasters of both the natural and the man-made variety. Let me remind those present today of the four essential ingredients: first, an integrated approach; secondly, an information system that can provide early warnings; thirdly, a rapid response; and fourthly, a high degree of coordination and competence among all the United Nations agencies and departments involved. Of these, a rapid response is the most difficult to achieve, since it requires not only a commitment of resources, but the political will to act.

Let me again turn for a moment to focus on the tragedy in Rwanda. The international community has

undertaken a massive humanitarian relief effort to address the immense human suffering brought about by the crisis in Rwanda. However, enormous effort is still required on several fronts to stabilize the situation and help promote conditions that will encourage refugee repatriation, national reconciliation, and lasting peace.

While the war in Rwanda may be over, the underlying turmoil is not: two million refugees remain outside the country, with hundreds of thousands more displaced internally. Extremist militias are fomenting violence in the camps and intimidating refugees who wish to be repatriated.

In these circumstances, the international community's first priorities should be to ensure that fighting and wide-spread violence are not resumed, and that conditions are created inside Rwanda which set the stage for an overall reconciliation. We need to improve security and stability inside Rwanda, through more effective deployment of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) and accelerated deployment of human rights monitors. We need to enhance security in the camps outside Rwanda. We need to identify and punish the planners and perpetrators of the acts of genocide, through expedited action by the International Tribunal.

We need to help improve conditions inside Rwanda through assistance to the new government to allow it to function, restore basic services, and restart the judicial processes. We need to ensure that the new government makes good on its promise to uphold the basic principles of the Arusha peace agreements: power sharing, an integrated security force, and respect for human rights. These goals need to be pursued from a regional perspective, with the active involvement of Rwanda's neighbours. This is indeed an ambitious endeavour, one that can succeed only through sustained, coordinated support by the international community.

In closing, I want to emphasize the importance of the work that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations as a whole do to help people in desperate need. Behind the statistics of missions conducted, dollars contributed, and tons of supplies delivered, there is the human reality of lives saved, children fed, and hopes reborn. Because so many humanitarian missions now have a political dimension and because of the terrible frustrations experienced in some areas, it is useful to reaffirm the principle that once the United Nations has authorized the delivery of

humanitarian aid, no power on Earth has the right to prevent its delivery. Summoning the will and the power to enforce that principle is a challenge and responsibility for us all.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on Mr. Mario Lander, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Lander (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour and pleasure of thanking all the States represented here who joined in granting our 163-member International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies the status of Permanent Observer in this forum of nations.

I wish to express the pleasure and the pride of the International Federation as it assumes its role in the General Assembly as Permanent Observer. The granting of this status is for us a high privilege. We commit ourselves to expressing only the most carefully considered, responsible views and to undertaking a thoughtful examination of issues relating to humanitarian service, on the basis of our operational experience as the world's largest humanitarian service network. We desire, in the phrase of the current time, to add value to the proceedings of the General Assembly, and we hope that our relationship will always be one of colleagues in search of the best, most practical and most creative solutions to humanitarian service needs.

With regard now to the matter before the General Assembly, agenda item 37 (a), we are generally supportive of the report (A/49/177 and Add.1) on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations. I would, however, add a few thoughts on the general topic of the coordination of humanitarian action in disaster situations, both man-made and natural.

Responding to disasters today poses many problems for operational agencies such as the International Federation. In many areas, the principle of humanitarianism is gradually being eroded. Agencies that act to alleviate suffering whenever and wherever it is found often find themselves doing so in a political vacuum. We are addressing the effects of disaster, but often the causes remain unresolved. Humanitarian aid cannot be a substitute for peacemaking and peace-keeping. In developing strategies to address complex disasters, the political and

military dimensions must be addressed in parallel with the humanitarian one, while at the same time a clear distinction must be maintained on the ground between humanitarian action and other actions taken by the international community — a difficult but necessary balancing act.

Moreover, today's disasters no longer present a simple picture of innocent suffering and simple causes. The need to address human- rights issues, both past and present, sits uneasily beside the need to provide for essential life-support services. At the same time as disaster response is becoming more complex, it is being played out on an increasingly public stage, with ramifications for the quality of the delivery of services and for funding support.

In seeking to play an honest and effective role in close cooperation with other operational agencies, we have become convinced over the past 75 years that, more than ever before, humanitarian agencies must think through and then apply the implications of truly acting in a neutral, independent and impartial fashion. Clarity of purpose and action is a key principle in allowing agencies to steer through the political minefields of today's complex disasters.

It is for this reason that the International Federation, in collaboration with its colleague organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and six leading international non-governmental organization coalitions, has developed and put into practice a code of conduct for relief agencies. This code lays down for the first time a set of ethical and behavioural standards to which all international disaster response organizations can and should commit themselves. I believe that setting and attaining agreed standards of excellence in our chosen profession is one of the most effective ways of enhancing the coordination of agencies.

While coordination is an essential component of improving disaster response, it must be complemented by a better understanding of what this means in practice. Our experience, particularly in the recent high-profile disasters of Somalia, Liberia and Rwanda, strengthens our conviction that the way in which agencies deliver assistance is as important as what they deliver.

The serious security problems in disaster situations, particularly those involving large numbers of displaced persons or refugees, is a case in point. The Secretary-General has addressed himself to this situation eloquently.

Just as humanitarian assistance has had to develop a range of specialized tools to do its work, so, too, must peace-keeping. One such tool could be a police force specifically to provide security in camps for refugees and displaced persons where the well-being of the camps' inhabitants is threatened. The lack of security in places such as the former Yugoslavia and Somalia is well known, but the situation is endemic in many areas where humanitarian assistance is being given. It is currently particularly serious in many of the Rwandese refugee camps, in some of which hands of ex-soldiers are in effect holding the refugees hostage.

Our Red Cross/Red Crescent camps in Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire, where we are caring for more than 800,000 refugees, have so far largely escaped such situations. We believe that this is because of the way in which we work through local bodies and to a long-term agenda. But the situation could change overnight. After all our people working in the camps, are specialists in humanitarian service, not policemen. Identical security problems affect humanitarian relief efforts in places as widely separated as Afghanistan, Georgia, Kenya, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

We are firmly committed to advocating and defending humanitarian principles, not just because they are important, but because we are in the privileged position of being able to work directly with some 19 million disaster victims worldwide. This privilege not only entitles us, but obliges us, to speak up in defence of the principles of humanity, an obligation that I hope we can meet here in the Assembly.

In this context, I should like to highlight the problem of "popular" disasters, those which receive plenty of media coverage and adequate funding. But there are other disasters whose victims suffer no less for being overlooked, neglected and forgotten. We must find ways of assisting all

disaster victims equally, regardless of the interest taken in them by the media or the public.

Similarly, we must find better ways of drawing attention to the need to prevent suffering, and apply funds for that purpose, rather than simply deal with the aftermath of a disaster. Disaster preparedness and capacity-building of local institutions have been sorely neglected in recent years, except in rhetoric. Relief spending as a percentage of official development assistance has skyrocketed, diverting funds intended for the less immediate, but more basic, needs of preparedness.

Before concluding, I should like to say that we in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are very proud to share this forum with our colleagues from the International Committee of the Red Cross. Although independent organizations, we intend to speak as much as possible with one voice on humanitarian service issues, clearly and responsibly, on behalf of the most vulnerable and suffering people of the world.

I repeat that we are very proud to join those who are permitted to contribute to the deliberations of this important Assembly.

The President: Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to inform members that, due to the lateness of the hour, the remaining speakers scheduled for this afternoon will be heard on Friday, 25 November 1994, in the morning.

I wish everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving holiday.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.



General Assembly

Forty-ninth Session

67th MeetingFriday, 25 November 1994, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Essy (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 37 (continued)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

(i) Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/177, Corr.1 and Add.1)

(ii) Draft resolution (A/49/L.19)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

(i) Reports of the Secretary-General (A/49/158, A/49/263 and Corr.1, A/49/356, A/49/376, A/49/387 and Corr.1, A/49/388, A/49/396, A/49/397, A/49/431, A/49/456, A/49/466, A/49/470, A/49/516, A/49/562, A/49/581, A/49/683)

(ii) Draft resolutions (A/49/L.26, A/49/L.28, A/49/L.30, A/49/L.31, A/49/L.32, A/49/L.34, A/49/L.36, A/49/L.37)

(c) International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

(i) Note by the Secretary-General (A/49/453)

(ii) Report of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (A/CONF.172/9 and Add.1)

(iii) Draft resolutions (A/49/L.21, A/49/L.29)

(d) International cooperation to mitigate the environmental consequences on Kuwait and other countries in the region resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait: report of the Secretary-General (A/49/207 and Corr.1)

(f) Emergency international assistance for a solution to the problem of refugees, the restoration of total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development in war-stricken Rwanda: draft resolution (A/49/L.24/Rev.1)

(g) Special assistance to countries receiving refugees from Rwanda: draft resolution (A/49/L.17/Rev.1)

The President (*interpretation from French*): I wish to draw the attention of members to two additional draft resolutions the Assembly has before it under sub-item (b) of agenda item 37: first, draft resolution A/49/L.34 entitled "Assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti"; and, secondly, draft resolution A/49/L.37, entitled "Special plan of economic cooperation for Central America".



I call on the representative of Algeria to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.24/Rev.1.

Mr. Belhimeur (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): It is my honour to introduce, on behalf of the Group of 77 and its other co-sponsors, draft resolution A/49/L.24/Rev.1, entitled "Emergency international assistance for a solution to the problem of refugees, the restoration of total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development in war-stricken Rwanda".

I am pleased to say that the draft resolution incorporates the useful suggestions made by many delegations, members of the Group of 77 as well as of other groups. Its improvement in content and form helped give the draft resolution its large number of co-sponsors.

On behalf of the Group of 77 the Algerian delegation wishes to extend its profound and sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for his report (A/49/516) on emergency assistance for the socio-economic rehabilitation of Rwanda. It is most regrettable that the resumption of the civil war and the vicissitudes experienced with regard to the Arusha Peace Agreement have interfered with the implementation of resolution 48/211 of 21 December 1993 entitled "Emergency assistance for the socio-economic rehabilitation of Rwanda".

Draft resolution A/49/L.24/Rev.1, to be seen in the context of the end of the war in Rwanda, draws the attention of the international community to the need for emergency international assistance for that country, bled white economically, financially and socially. As the preamble and operative paragraphs indicate, the draft resolution emphasizes the need for emergency international assistance for a solution to the problem of refugees, the restoration of total peace and reconstruction and socio-economic development in war-stricken Rwanda.

In the light of its primarily humanitarian nature, the draft resolution should be considered with care and should be adopted by consensus.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Morocco to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.34.

Mr. Amaziane (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour and pleasure to introduce, on behalf of Djibouti and my own country, draft resolution A/49/L.34, entitled "Assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti".

Djibouti, this brotherly and friendly country, deserves the solidarity of the international community for more than one reason. It is one of the least developed countries in the world, being in a category of countries whose economies are marked by structural weaknesses and by factors that make them extremely vulnerable to external shocks and natural or man-made disasters.

In addition, Djibouti is in an arid zone, with a climate of extremes, recurring drought and rampant desertification. Moreover, because of regional conflicts, particularly the conflict in Somalia, Djibouti has had an influx of more than 100,000 refugees, putting its fragile economic, social and administrative infrastructure under great tension and causing serious security problems.

Moreover, these regional conflicts have disrupted service, transit and exchange activities, thus draining away vital State revenues, and this has harmed the implementation of many priority development projects.

Finally, more recently, in November, torrential rains and unprecedented flooding devastated the country, causing the deaths of dozens of people, the disappearance of hundreds of others, the demolition of thousands of homes, the disintegration of important sectors of the national infrastructure and the destruction of cattle.

For all these reasons, my country urgently appeals to the international community to increase its financial and technical assistance to Djibouti and to support its reconstruction and development efforts. In that context, my delegation wishes to draw the attention of Member States to the Round Table for Djibouti to be organized in Geneva in March 1995, and requests developed countries and other donors to participate in large numbers.

Finally, the co-sponsors wish to thank all countries and organizations that have rendered emergency assistance to Djibouti. This draft resolution, which follows the traditional draft resolution on humanitarian assistance to that country, is humanitarian in nature, and we hope that the Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

Mr. Barac (Romania): My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his report (A/49/356) entitled "Economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)". I should like to make a few comments on this important document.

The report contains general information and data about the negative consequences of the implementation of Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) for neighbouring countries and other countries in the region. The actual magnitude of the impact of the sanctions varies according to the specific situation of the affected country, including the intensity of its economic ties with the former Yugoslavia, the commodity composition of its trade and the proximity and costs of alternative trade routes.

As far as Romania is concerned, I should like to stress that the implementation of the sanctions has seriously affected both external accounts and a variety of domestic variables, including economic outputs, investments, employment and the fiscal budget. The major branches of the Romanian economy that have been seriously damaged are: industry; agriculture and the food industry — for which the negative impact was mainly a result of disrupted production links, the cancellation of shipments of commodities and raw materials, and unsold goods — transportation (as a result of the suppression of traditional air, rail, road and river routes, not to mention the tremendous difficulties for the Danube river traffic); tourism; unreceived custom taxes and fees; and so on.

The Secretary-General rightly emphasizes in his report that

“a specific feature of the Yugoslav sanctions is the unusually high cost of their ‘secondary side effects’”. (A/49/356, para. 19).

The report also underscores the fact that

“the bulk of the trade losses reported by the affected countries stem from additional costs as a result of the disruption of transportation across the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ... They are likely to be more significant for such countries as Bulgaria, Romania and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In addition to the increased transportation costs, current account losses reflect reductions in transportation receipts, transit fees and revenues from communications.” (*ibid.*, para. 19).

Despite several instances of past and current application of Article 50, we note from the report that

“there is no uniform and internationally recognized methodology for identifying and assessing the nature

and magnitude of the specific economic problems of non-target States as a result of mandatory economic sanctions.” (*ibid.*, para. 12).

We consider that it is to the benefit of both the affected countries and the international community to have an internationally recognized methodology for identifying and assessing the nature and magnitude of the losses and damages caused by the embargo regime.

As it is mentioned in the report, Romania, like other countries in the region, has received some assistance from a number of countries and from international organizations. I take this opportunity to express the gratitude of the Government of Romania to all countries and international organizations that have showed concern over our difficulties and to praise those that have already decided to afford us some assistance.

However, the assistance received in direct connection with the sanctions regime compensates for a small part of the large amount of losses and damages caused by the implementation of the sanctions. In this context, we hope that the concerns showed by some States, over the difficulties Romania is currently facing, will soon be replaced by concrete cooperation programmes, and let me emphasize: cooperation programmes in the context of the economic difficulties sustained by Romania as a consequence of the sanctions regime.

The last chapter of the Secretary-General's report, although brief, contains important conclusions, and we are grateful to him for providing such a clear outline. I shall limit myself to enumerating some of the conclusions that, in our view, have a significant importance for the future work of the United Nations.

It is underscored that, while a precise quantification of the losses is difficult for a variety of reasons,

“there is no doubt about the fact that all the neighbouring countries and several other States in the region have been substantially affected as a result of the sanctions.” (*ibid.*, para. 76).

The report concludes that

“the total adverse impact of the sanctions is such that it requires a concerted and multifaceted response from the international community.” (*ibid.*).

It is clearly said that

"there is no mechanism in the United Nations to address the spirit of Article 50 effectively and systematically." (*ibid.*, para. 80).

Since, in our view, there is no mechanism at all, we consider that finding a solution to this problem be a priority for the United Nations.

The report specifically mentions that, within the international financial institutions, there is "no compensatory or contingency financing", and that

"no special mechanism has been established to directly address the adverse spillover effects of the sanctions imposed on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia." (*ibid.*, para. 77).

We concur with the conclusion that additional financial resources should be mobilized from bilateral sources, international financial institutions, regional banks and the private sector in order adequately to respond to the substantial additional requirements resulting from the sanctions regime.

The last conclusion we consider important to mention is the Secretary-General's comment that,

"it is essential to identify a set of general issues (principles or criteria) for the purpose of impact analysis and assessment on a more standardized basis." (*ibid.*, para. 14).

In our view, those are the main issues to be solved on a priority basis. Once the problems of mechanism, resources, standard approach and political will are solved, assistance to non-target States affected by sanctions will only be a question of implementation. We are of the opinion that the conclusions contained in the Secretary-General's report should guide the future work of the Organization, and will benefit from the pertinent response and approach from the current session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Al-Sabah (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation wishes to comment on agenda item 37 (d), entitled "International cooperation to mitigate the environmental consequences on Kuwait and other countries in the region resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait: report of the Secretary-General".

At the outset, I should like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his report (A/49/207). It contains accurate and valuable information on the environmental situation in the Gulf area, and the grave environmental damage to the marine, land and atmospheric ecosystem and health of the region.

The environment in our region was one of the victims of the misguided Iraqi attack on the State of Kuwait on 2 August 1990. The environmental destruction was comprehensive and was not confined only to Kuwait but also affected the entire Gulf area and geographic areas much further afield. Since the attack on Kuwait, the environment in our region has suffered and will continue to suffer for an unknown period in the future. Although three years have passed since the last oil wells set ablaze by the Iraqi regime were extinguished, human health was and continues to be endangered as a result of the atmospheric pollution in the region due to the destruction of oil wells, and blasting which led to the release of large amounts of hazardous chemical matters and lethal chemicals in Kuwait and the region.

The pall of smoke was so thick that we in the Gulf region could not tell day from night. The environmental crimes perpetrated by the Iraqi regime did not affect the atmosphere only; it damaged the marine and land environments as well. Kuwait continues to suffer from the damage to soil and vegetation caused by the Iraqi regime having set fire to oil wells. Large quantities of crude oil from those wells have spread to form more than 240 vast lakes of oil in the desert. Some of those lakes are as much as one metre in depth.

Moreover, many land-mines remain, along with tonnes of buried ammunition, left behind in Kuwait by the Iraqi regime. These continue to threaten life and environment in our country. It is no secret that hundreds of innocent Kuwaiti civilians, including the elderly, youths and children, have lost their lives because of the presence of these mines and devices.

The marine environment too has been gravely affected: the Iraqi regime dumped between 6 million and 8 million barrels of oil into the waters of the Gulf. Many studies and reports on this matter have affirmed that this oil pollution has killed tens of thousands of sea birds. Moreover, oil now covers hundreds of square kilometres of marine vegetation, which has been damaged by the pollution. Our marine environment continues to suffer as a result of the presence in the Gulf of sea-mines and wrecked oil tankers and other ships.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) recently surveyed the pollution resulting from the wrecks of oil tankers and other ships in the northern part of the Gulf. The preliminary findings state, *inter alia*: first, that there are many wrecks posing a threat to the safety of international navigation; second, that there is obvious pollution of the marine environment, into which oil from sunken tankers continues to seep, and that grave environmental disasters could occur since many of these wrecked tankers still hold much of their cargo; third, that pollution continues owing to the currents of polluted waters from the Shaat al-Arab, where many boats, cargo vessels and oil tankers were sunk, posing an ongoing threat to the coastal regions of neighbouring countries; fourth, that the more than 200 wrecks near northern Kuwait, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq pose a clear threat to maritime traffic as there are no visible markers, although some wrecks are marked with green buoys; fifth, that there is obvious pollution from oil and oil derivatives in the survey area, with initial examination of some oil-tanker wrecks showing that these continue to hold fuel and lubrication oils in addition to portions of their cargo; and finally, that many mines and shipwrecks of various sizes lie in territorial and international waters in the northern part of the survey area, most important among them the huge Iraqi oil tanker, *Al-Amariya*, which was sunk in international waters south of the port of *Al-Bakr* in 35 metres of water and which was carrying heavy Iraqi crude. The *Al-Amariya* was cut in half, and still holds more than 100,000 tonnes of oil. The wrecks of more than 20 other oil tankers lie between *Al-Zubir* and *Umm-Qasr*, including the wreck of the tanker *Tadmur* and two oil container ships, one of which is sunk. All these ships are still loaded with oil and lubricants.

It is clear that the rehabilitation of a marine environment constantly exposed to oil and oil derivatives seeping from wrecks, including ensuring safety of navigation in the northern Gulf, requires coordination of efforts by the affected States, the international community and the relevant international organizations. Cooperation and coordination in this regard could be achieved through joint regional and international programmes on the following basis: first, immediate retrieval without any delay of the cargo of the *Al-Amariya*, both fuel and crude oil, as the wreck poses the threat of an imminent major environmental disaster; second, we must recover the cargo of the other sunken tankers, as such cargo poses imminent threat to the environment; third, clearly visible buoys and other markers must be placed, identifying the location of these wrecks, to ensure the safety of international shipping until such wreckage is removed.

My delegation reaffirms the need to implement those recommendations. They must be an urgent priority. Any delay could lead to an environmental disaster that threatens not only Kuwait, but all the other States of the region as well.

Mr. Escobar (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Colombia supports the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations and disaster relief including special economic assistance. We stress the importance we attach to the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation, containing the Principles, the Strategy and the Plan of Action -- all bearing the name of the hospitable city that hosted the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction.

Colombia lies in the north-west corner of South America in an area of highly complex tectonics, where the Nazca, South American and Caribbean plates meet, generating great seismic and volcanic activity, which manifests itself in damaging earthquakes and tidal waves, as well as in the recent volcanic eruptions. The steepness of our mountains, added to biological and meteorological activities such as the rain, wind and temperature changes that are characteristic of tropical climates, makes our country prone to severe erosion, landslides and flooding. Moreover, because the majority of the population lives in urban areas in the most dangerous zones, and owing to the process of industrialization, the potential for natural disasters in our country is extremely great.

Throughout their history, Colombians have suffered from the consequences of events as devastating as the total destruction of the city of Cucuta; the Tumaco earthquake and tidal wave of 1906, one of the gravest disasters of modern times; and eruptions of volcanos such as Galeras, Ruiz and Doña Juana. In recent years there have been events such as the earthquakes at Antiguo Caldas, Popayan and Atrato Medio; the 1979 tidal wave at Tumaco and El Charco; the Nevado del Ruiz eruption of 1985; various landslides; hurricane Joan in 1988 and tornado Bret in 1993, which affected the Atlantic coast; and the floods that occur periodically in low-lying areas. All these underscore the risks to which our environment is subject and the reason why our country is considered to be one of the most likely to be affected by natural disasters.

During 1994 the most damaging of the tragic events that took place was the earthquake on 6 June in the

Departments of Cauca and Huila, its epicentre was in an area of high mountains populated principally by indigenous communities of Paeces and Guambianos. The earthquake caused severe damage in several villages. Accompanied by heavy rains that saturated the soil on the upper basin of the Paez River, the earthquake caused simultaneous landslides which, converging with the river basin, generated a flow that destroyed housing, crops and infrastructure in its wake. One hundred and twenty-eight persons died, and 429 disappeared. Among other things, more than 100 kilometres of roads were damaged, 1,664 dwellings were destroyed and 3,160 were damaged. Relief organizations dealt with 28,589 people who had been directly affected.

We are grateful that at such tragic times we have been able to rely on the kindness and generosity of Governments and peoples throughout the world. This solidarity has drawn us even closer to those who have lent us their support, participated in our suffering, enhanced the nobility of the human person and shared our common fate.

Recognizing our country's vulnerability, the Government has set up the National System for the Prevention and Limitation of Disasters. It consists of already existing State bodies at various levels and is designed to ensure the decentralization of its actions. The System's activities include risk-reduction and the rehabilitation of affected areas, with the help of the central Government and the assistance of international organizations for technological cooperation. These activities are being developed as part of a national plan in which national proposals are formulated on various fields of action such as the mapping of areas threatened by natural disasters; the identification of high-risk areas; the surveying and monitoring of natural phenomena; the strengthening of institutions and finances; the setting up of reserve centres and the preparation of emergency plans; education and training; the incorporation of prevention into municipal and regional development plans; analysis of vulnerability and relocation of housing in high-risk areas; post-disaster reconstruction; and the recovery of degraded river basins. All this is being done at the local, regional and national levels through inter-institutional and community cooperation.

Among other activities, the Government has recognized that if significant progress in disaster prevention is to be achieved it is necessary to institutionalize public, private and community bodies engaged in technological, scientific, planning and educational activities into one multisectoral and multidisciplinary organization. That will ensure preventive, coherent and consistent development.

For example, among the projects that have been supported and coordinated for the purpose of monitoring, early-warning and research into various natural phenomena, a tsunami detection and warning system has been established along the Pacific coast of Colombia and Ecuador under an agreement between the two countries. We have a network of national seismological satellites; three centres for volcanic research have been set up in Manizales, Pasto and Popayán for the constant monitoring of the activities of 14 volcanoes, including the El Ruiz and El Galeras volcanoes; a satellite network for hydrometeorological warning has been set up, composed of some 150 stations and remote-sensing and manned stations for satellite imaging, in conjunction with the Miami Hurricane Center.

In 1994, from 21 to 24 March, an Interamerican Conference on National Experiences in Natural Disasters was held at Cartagena de Indias with more than 1,000 experts in attendance from most of the continent's countries. The Cartagena Declaration that resulted from that Conference was a turning point and generated a new frame of reference on the subject.

Mr. Seniloli (Fiji), Vice-President, took the Chair.

At the World Conference, Colombia, on behalf of its sister countries, acted as a spokesman for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States at the preparatory meetings and had the honour of serving as a Vice-President and of submitting to the Main Committee, over which we presided, both Latin America's views on natural-disaster reduction and its expectations for the participation of non-governmental organizations in this sphere.

Our Government will continue to encourage and strengthen subregional, regional and international cooperation in disaster prevention and to support those countries that suffer the consequences of such disasters.

Our country attaches particular importance to the provision of humanitarian assistance, based on the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality; to the strengthening of the early-warning capabilities in the United Nations system and their improvement and coordination; and to the proposal made at the World Conference to share the technology required in order to prevent and reduce disasters and mitigate their effects. We understand that in this area, as in others, the creation, discernment and application of knowledge must be the heritage of mankind and freely open to all peoples.

We understand the urgent need to implement the Yokohama Strategy. We are conscious of the weight of many human lives — for instance that of the small child Omaira, symbol of the tragedy of Armero, that Colombian city buried in November 1985 by the eruption of the Ruiz volcano. They and others are calling out to us in the expectation that we will save them. They are asking us all to come together and make our world a safer place.

Mr. Mansour (Lebanon) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to express appreciation and gratitude to His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the efforts he has made, as well as for his report (A/49/388) of 22 September 1994, with regard to assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon. That report gives an account of the special emergency economic assistance granted our country, which continues to struggle for reconstruction and for the liberation of its territory from Israeli occupation.

Since its establishment in 1992, the present Government of Lebanon has continued to seek a solution to the urgent economic political, social and public problems that exist throughout Lebanese national territory in order to attain the objectives of the Taef Agreement of 1989. Action for the development and reconstruction of the country has made itself felt in Lebanon's daily life. Thanks to the structural adjustment and macro-economic programme established by the Government, the economy has shown outstanding annual growth in terms of the gross domestic product, assessed at \$7 billion in 1993, as compared with \$4 billion in 1992.

It should also be noted that the Lebanese Government has taken some necessary measures that have had direct and positive effects on the economic, financial and social situation. The Government has brought the national currency under control. The currency has been stabilized in relation to the dollar, and the inflation rate fell from 131 per cent in 1992 to 8.9 per cent in 1993. The public deficit has been reduced from 56 per cent to 49 per cent, and the reserves of the Central Bank, which were \$1.9 billion at the end of 1993, rose to \$4 billion by the end of July 1994. This policy made possible a gradual strengthening of confidence in the business world, stabilization of the economy, improvement of public services and the achievement of satisfactory results on the macro-economic level through the adoption of a structural policy on housing, the reintegration of displaced persons, the utilization of human resources and the retraining of the labour force.

The Government has also given priority to the planning process aimed at rebuilding the economy in the medium and long term through two programmes. First, we have the National Emergency Rehabilitation Programme (NERP), which is a triennial programme with a turnover of \$2.24 billion. This programme is designed to restore the operation of the public service infrastructure and to mitigate and resolve social problems. Secondly, there is the Parallel Programme for Recovery and Development (PPRD), the objective of which is to make lasting improvements in areas such as social services, housing and reconstruction.

Through the programme of United Nations Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon (UNARDOL), the United Nations is participating in activities for the reconstruction of the country. The operational activities of United Nations organizations in Lebanon, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) have been remarkably effective in the areas of humanitarian assistance, emergency recovery, sanitation, agriculture, aid for reconstruction and the macro-economic and social development of the country.

The Lebanese Government, which has committed itself to the reconstruction and recovery of the national economy after 17 years of war, has been able to implement a structural adjustment programme leading, according to the report of the Secretary-General in document A/49/388,

"to an improved economic situation, which currently appears to have been consolidated." (A/49/388, para. 118)

Even if my Government has been able to cope with the major economic and social problems and to withstand

the painful consequences of the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, it should be emphasized that the burden of 17 years of war and a continuing occupation is a very heavy one. As a result, the need for assistance and support by the United Nations remains desirable and urgent. For this reason my country, which welcomes the generous assistance provided by the United Nations, hopes that the recommendation of the Secretary-General that provides for ending the UNARDOL programme at the end of 1994 will be reviewed, since the United Nations had envisaged that the biennial programme would run until the end of 1995.

Mr. Qader (Bangladesh): I am indeed happy for the opportunity to speak today on this important agenda item, "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".

I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen, for the commendable work that he has undertaken under the most difficult circumstances. The Secretary-General also deserves our thanks for his useful reports on the subject.

My delegation fully endorses the sentiments expressed by the Chairman of the Group of 77.

The recent dramatic increase in natural and man-made disasters and civil and ethnic strife has demonstrated the need for more effective and coordinated responses by the international community. Bangladesh believes that the provision of humanitarian assistance in an adequate and timely manner can create a positive environment for improving security conditions and can provide an opportunity to address the underlying problems. An appropriate and prompt response to emergency situations is crucial in assisting victims, defusing tension and creating a climate conducive to the resolution of crisis situations.

Natural disasters and other emergencies create additional pressure on the economies of the developing countries that are suffering from the chronic problems of poverty and underdevelopment. We feel strongly that humanitarian assistance should address the root causes of emergencies. Otherwise, the recurrence of emergencies could not be prevented and States would not be able to grow out of the "relief dependency syndrome". It is therefore very important that the transition from relief to rehabilitation and long-term sustainable-development programmes be ensured.

The interrelationship between humanitarian activities and those relating to peace-making and peace-keeping is becoming increasingly evident. The delivery of humanitarian assistance has indeed become a vital part of United Nations peacemaking and peace-keeping endeavours. However, in formulating United Nations humanitarian responses to complex emergencies, it should be kept in mind that the humanitarian aspect should not be overtaken by political considerations. Bangladesh believes that humanitarian diplomacy, as it has been conceptualized and is being carried out by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, forms an important part of preventive diplomacy. The Secretary-General's proposals on curative and preventive development, in his recent report (A/49/665) on "An agenda for development", deserve careful consideration, as they form an integral part of any strategy on coordination of humanitarian assistance.

The security of humanitarian personnel should receive urgent attention. Tasks of humanitarian relief personnel in many areas of the world have become increasingly difficult in recent months. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the safety and security of personnel engaged in humanitarian relief works. Bangladesh fully supports the initiative under way for a legally binding convention in this field.

Since its creation, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) has been used in a number of emergency situations with encouraging results. Given the increasing demands on the Fund due to the proliferation and magnitude of crisis situations and to some delay in the replenishment of the Fund, we feel that it is time to address seriously the issue of readjusting CERF's resources. We support the recommendation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to increase the size of the Fund.

Most of the recommendations of the IASC contained in the Secretary-General's report are useful ones. We believe that the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the in-country disaster management team should continue to be the first line of response to disasters and emergencies. We support measures to strengthen the resident coordinator system. The designation or appointment of a humanitarian coordinator in complex emergency situations should be thoroughly scrutinized, examining the individual merit of the case and the gravity of particular situations.

A recent increase in the number of natural disasters and the consequent damage caused to the economies of concerned countries need the urgent attention of the international community. Natural disasters cause serious damage to all countries, irrespective of their levels of development. However, the especial vulnerability of the developing countries to natural disaster and its recurrence in those countries are matters of great concern. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has a special responsibility in this regard. Developing countries suffer more, and the damage to their economies is greater because of they have a weaker infrastructure and are less able to respond immediately and effectively to disasters. International solidarity is therefore essential to reduce the consequences of natural calamities in the developing countries.

In many cases, population pressures and poverty have led people to live in areas already exposed to natural and man-made hazards. The broader problems of poverty, population growth rate and so forth should therefore be addressed in an integrated and urgent manner in order to prevent and limit the consequences of disasters. Mitigation measures should be built into development programmes and be an integral part of the continuum spanning disaster, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. Disaster-prone countries must at the same time be provided with the necessary resources and technical know-how to strengthen their preventive and mitigating capabilities.

The collection and dissemination of information and the United Nations natural-disaster early-warning systems have to be strengthened. It is to be noted that the impact of natural disasters is felt most during the first two or three days. Any delay in reaching the affected people may cause thousands of deaths; the prompt dispatch of a United Nations disaster assessment and coordination stand-by team and necessary resources is therefore very crucial.

My delegation would like to commend the work of the office of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva in the field of natural-disaster relief assistance. There is a need to enhance the indigenous capabilities of Member States to face natural disasters effectively. The United Nations can further help disaster-prone countries to develop disaster-mitigation programmes and an early warning system. The joint Department of Humanitarian Affairs United Nations Development Programme Disaster Management Training Programme for disaster-prone developing countries is a positive step in this direction. We note with satisfaction that the first phase of the Programme has been completed. We welcome the proposal for the

second phase of the Programme, which has as its central goal the reduction of vulnerability to disasters and emergencies. Bangladesh would be happy to share its own experience in handling natural disasters with disaster-prone countries or United Nations agencies.

Bangladesh feels that the designation of the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was a timely and laudable initiative by the United Nations to promote awareness of the importance of disaster reduction. We are concerned that the Decade's programme has been hampered by the proliferation of political and ethnic upheavals of the last few years, which have absorbed valuable resources. We believe that with a fraction of what is being invested every year in relief, national and local capabilities for disaster reduction could be strengthened. Today, the need for prevention is stronger, both in countries in the grips of complex emergencies and in those countries — the large majority — facing increasingly severe natural disasters, often compounded by environmental degradation and population increases. We feel that sustained efforts should be made to support the strengthening of the capabilities of vulnerable countries and promote the transfer of technology and information exchange.

The World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, held earlier this year, reiterated in its Plan of Action the goals and objectives of the Decade and invited attention to the need to work harder so that further concrete actions can be taken during the next half of the decade to fulfil these goals. The Conference has provided an important impetus for increased international cooperation and support through the Decade Framework. The international community must provide adequate resources to secure the timely implementation of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and its Plan of Action.

Bangladesh feels that the coordination of United Nations emergency-relief assistance can be more effective if it is synchronized with national relief efforts by taking into account their needs and priorities. This could be ensured through the proper integration of United Nations relief operations with those mounted by national authorities. National experiences and capacities are to be taken into account in dealing with special and recurrent emergencies. In this context, United Nations field agencies should work in close cooperation with national agencies.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that the United Nations is best equipped to play a central role in providing and coordinating humanitarian assistance, taking into account the principles of impartiality, neutrality and transparency that are the basis of its operations.

Mr. Eteffa (Ethiopia): The question of strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations has been on the agenda of the General Assembly as a priority issue since 1991. Resolutions have been adopted, and decisions have been taken by the Assembly and by the Economic and Social Council with a view to further improving and strengthening the existing emergency-response mechanism in the field of humanitarian assistance. The coordination of relief operations of the various United Nations humanitarian agencies and the need to increase financial and human resources for an effective and timely response to humanitarian emergencies, including the necessity of creating information systems for the purpose of early warnings, are some of the areas of concern to the General Assembly and the international community as a whole.

The Secretary-General's report (A/49/177) reflects a serious undertaking on the part of the United Nations to address the question of humanitarian-emergencies coordination in a comprehensive manner.

It covers issues related to humanitarian emergencies to enable us to assess and review the activities of the United Nations and humanitarian agencies and, most important, it indicates to us that the way to respond to complex emergencies in time is to establish strong and effective coordination mechanisms.

The conclusions of the Secretary-General, which are largely drawn from field experience, could serve as a basis for international humanitarian intervention, which by its very nature requires an effective and timely response.

For us in Ethiopia the issue under consideration has a special significance, since we know only too well how it feels to be confronted with the need to respond to emergency humanitarian situations rapidly. The experience we have accumulated over the past decades, in terms of setting up both institutional and legal frameworks to cope with emergency situations, have enabled us to draw practical lessons on how to avert the adverse effects of man-made and natural disasters.

The 1972 to 1973 and 1984 to 1985 drought and famine situation in Ethiopia caused enormous loss of life

and displacement of persons. These occurrences and their devastating effects were mainly the result of the former regime's inadequate preparations, ineffective coordination, mismanagement of humanitarian relief operations and reluctance to provide information obtained through the early warning system to the donor community in time. This definitely contributed to the worsening of an already grave, emergency situation.

At present we do not really have control over the drought situation. However, if humanitarian emergencies are linked to rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction and eventually to sustainable development, the magnitude of suffering by famine victims as a result of drought can be lessened. In Ethiopia, peasants suffer from famine periodically because the system of subsistence agriculture has not changed for centuries. Changing the traditional mode of subsistence farming to modern commercial agriculture would mean not only that a smaller percentage of the population would be engaged in the production of food items, but also that surplus food would be available when drought occurred.

The policy of marketing and forced agricultural collectivization and the forced resettlement programmes of the Mengistu dictatorship also contributed greatly to the shortage of agricultural production. The prolonged and senseless civil wars and conflicts in the country were also among the main causes of the devastating effects of the recurring famine and drought.

Today in Ethiopia serious and genuine attempts have been made to carry out relief operations and related development activities in a more rational, efficient and well-coordinated manner. The present famine situation in the country, which is caused mainly by erratic and inadequate rains and the outbreak of plant pests and cattle disease is being tackled with the great attention it deserves.

Following last April's announcement of the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission that 6.7 million people were threatened by famine, the Government took a series of measures aimed at alleviating the problem. The famine victims include not only small farmers but also displaced persons, returnees from neighbouring countries and demobilized soldiers who still need the support and assistance of the Government. The initial step that the Government took was immediately to convene the National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, to chart an

appropriate strategy to meet the crisis effectively. Accordingly, a two-pronged approach has been adopted by the Government, that is, to strengthen the emergency-relief programme and to create favourable conditions for peasants to be rehabilitated and resume farming.

The measures taken by the Government include: distribution of relief food from the country's food reserve to the most affected areas, mobilization of Government short-haul trucks and private vehicles for transport relief aid, and the construction of new feeder roads and repair of the badly damaged ones in inaccessible and vulnerable areas, with a view to providing food to the needy people before the advent of the rains.

A high-level Government delegation was also dispatched abroad to inform the international community about the outbreak of famine and to appeal to the donor community to help alleviate the crisis. The response was as compassionate as it has always been.

The Government also organized a working visit to the drought-affected localities for Resident Representatives of donor countries to demonstrate to them the extent and scope of the humanitarian emergency. Also, visits were arranged for the local population and members of various organizations to sensitize them to the devastating effects of the famine and to the enormous humanitarian tasks that lay ahead in order to alleviate the looming crisis.

For the purpose of smooth and effective coordination between and management by different governmental organs and regional offices, Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committees were set up at regional, zonal and district levels. An Emergency Operational Guidelines Manual, which clearly defines the responsibilities of all ministries and organizations involved in the relief work was also prepared.

To meet the need to strengthen the effectiveness of the country's existing early-warning system, a new National Committee on Early Warning was established. The National Committee is entrusted with the tasks of detecting a possible disaster and providing an assessment of the food prospects in the country. It is believed that information obtained through this system would place the Government in a better position to determine the extent of the crisis and to prepare contingency plans. The National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Fund, which is administered by a board, was also established in order to assist in the execution of relief programmes.

Relief assistance for humanitarian emergencies should not be considered as a lasting solution to problems emanating from natural disasters. Emergency situations are basically complex and require more than the temporary provision of relief aid. It is also obvious that emergency-relief aid cannot continue indefinitely. Therefore, relief and emergency assistance should be viewed in relation to rehabilitation, recovery, reconstruction and development efforts and should be addressed in a complementary manner — though it is always difficult to build a new house when the old one is burning; the fire must first be extinguished.

As is rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General,

"Emergency assistance must be provided to bring immediate relief to the affected populations, but the essence of multilateral action must be to help societies in crisis and nations in chaos stand on their own and resume activities leading to sustainable development". (*A/49/177, para. 77*).

It was with this in mind that the Government of Ethiopia adopted last year a National Policy on Disaster Management. This Policy is based on several interrelated principles, among which the linkage between relief and development is the most important.

In this regard, relief programmes should contribute to realizing the goals of sustainable development. This approach undoubtedly facilitates the transition from relief to the rehabilitation, recovery and development that are essential to securing the desired durable solutions to humanitarian crises. In this connection, the coordinated efforts of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations are of the essence. Let us hope that the compassion, cooperation and partnership of the donor community will continue.

We must recall that the total emergency relief food requirement in April 1994 was 751,000 metric tons. Pledges made by donor countries and humanitarian agencies cover 91 per cent of this. Thus far, however, only 44 per cent of the total pledged relief food has been received.

The country is in a critical emergency situation. If the effects of the drought and famine are to be mitigated and the national disaster prevention programme implemented — in particular, to ensure the success of human-centred sustainable development endeavours — it

is imperative that financial and material assistance continue.

In this connection, my delegation would like to seize this opportunity to pay tribute to all the donor countries and United Nations and humanitarian agencies for their assistance.

Although much remains to be done, the measures taken so far — I refer to the delivery of emergency assistance on the spot — have helped to avert massive loss of lives and desperate migration to urban centres in a search for relief aid. This is an encouraging development in view of the fact that the country is beset by various economic and social difficulties.

Ethiopia believes that humanitarian assistance is not the concern of just famine-stricken countries. The eradication of hunger should be an issue of global concern, and the international community should collectively discharge its humanitarian obligations.

Efficient and effective responses to humanitarian emergencies necessitate the development of a means of ensuring that national and international efforts complement each other and, by facilitating smooth operation, make an impact that is meaningful to the victims.

I should have liked to say that the question of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance ought never again to appear on the agenda of the General Assembly. However, this would only be wishful thinking, as humanitarian emergencies will be with us for some time to come. That being the case, it will be vital that humanitarian emergency assistance operations be coordinated. But let us all make relentless efforts to take this question off the agendas of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council by contributing to the termination of senseless violence and destruction around the globe and by seeking lasting solutions to recurring man-made and natural disasters.

We appreciate especially the coordinating role played by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, under the leadership of both Under-Secretaries-General Jan Eliasson and Mr. Peter Hansen. The Department should be strengthened in terms of manpower and material resources to enable it to handle the tremendous tasks that lie ahead.

Every effort should be made to stop violence and destruction, but at present there is no substitute for preparedness in terms of peacemaking, peace-keeping,

humanitarian intervention and political settlement. Only coordinated efforts will help to alleviate the problems. In this regard, the United Nations Development Programme, in its new role, and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in collaboration with other agencies, can play a role that will make a difference.

Mr. Ardhaoui (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): In this debate on agenda item 37 the delegation of Tunisia would first like to thank the Secretariat for the quality of the documentation that it has provided.

The Secretary-General's report refers to certain concerns regarding the devastating effects of natural disasters and other emergency situations and the loss of human life that they cause, as well as their negative impact on economic and social development. My delegation shares these concerns.

No region is today entirely free from and untouched by natural disasters and man-made devastation. Poverty, demographic pressure and the occupation of land in high-risk areas are all factors that have magnified ecological damage. In many cases they have been at the root of destruction and imbalance between man and his natural environment.

The complexity of natural disasters and other emergency situations means that the affected populations and the countries that fall victim must confront them with often very limited human and material resources. This demonstrates the importance of rapid intervention and the need for judicious coordination in the field to limit the damage, mitigate the consequences of disasters and enable populations to resume as normal a life as possible.

In this enormous task, the contribution of the United Nations system, along with that of governmental authorities, is of the greatest importance. Clearly, our States have all, in various capacities, established systems to cope with the most urgent aspects of these difficult situations. But in such conditions and complex situations, expertise, experience and the mastery of the skills that are available to the United Nations system are indispensable, given the dimensions that disasters often assume — dimensions that transcend the capacities of States.

In the field, the experience of the last few years has demonstrated that effectiveness in responding to disasters and emergency situations is a corollary of coordination

and centralization capable of harmonizing efforts, avoiding wastage of resources and improvisation.

The coordination of which we are thinking must take place, within the framework of the United Nations system, between the operational organizations and specialized agencies, under the aegis of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and in close cooperation with the Government of the country affected. This is the approach that was recently confirmed at the meetings of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, which took place in Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994.

This same approach was recently confirmed at the meetings of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, held in Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994. This important Conference drew up a Strategy and a Plan of Action, which the international community endorsed. The approach adopted thus will provide the foundations for disaster management in the years to come and in the next century.

We should also like to express our support for the activity of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and to renew our appeal that the Central Emergency Revolving Fund be given the necessary resources to consolidate its functioning, enhance its efficiency and allow it effectively to cope with disasters and other emergency situations.

We therefore call on the international community to take account of the needs for recovery and development in the long term of the countries concerned, and to do so from the very outset of a given emergency situation. This would help to strengthen the national capability, to mitigate the effects of catastrophes and to prevent a repetition of them. To this end, we should also like to voice our satisfaction at the proposal of President Menem of Argentina for the establishment of a volunteer corps, the "white helmets". Tunisia, which supports this initiative, believes that it could contribute to mitigating the effects of future disasters.

The Argentine initiative is particularly timely because it advocates a global approach aimed at supporting humanitarian assistance activities and at facilitating the transition from relief stage to the stages of recovery, reconstruction and development.

During the last decade, there has been a proliferation of conflicts and emergency situations in Africa. These disasters have caused peoples to suffer; they have resulted in the loss of social and economic gains, and they have

reduced the basis for development. They have also increased the flows of refugees and displaced persons. Significant financial and human resources as a result have been diverted towards emergency relief instead of being devoted to development.

The United Nations system should, in these conditions, support efforts likely to prevent emergency situations, provide for continuity between the relief stage and that of recovery, reconstruction and development, promote development, and finally assist the African countries in acquiring an early-warning and emergency intervention system.

The last summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), held at Tunis last June, adopted a code of conduct to be followed in organizing the relationships between the countries of Africa and in avoiding the repetition of disasters. This code of conduct, proposed by the President of Tunisia, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, is, as he emphasized, a commitment of civilization resulting from the patriotism of the African continent, built on fraternity, solidarity and tolerance.

The will expressed by Africa for a strengthening of the mechanism for conflict prevention, management and settlement thus attests to the determination of these peoples to work together to shelter the continent from factors of dissension. This act on the part of Africa — this act of faith — is clearly a harbinger of hope and a reason for it.

Mr. Zandamela (Mozambique): My delegation is pleased to speak on the question of the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance.

Humanitarian and disaster relief assistance remains one of the most critical areas in which our Organization must continue to strengthen further and redouble its efforts so that it may be able to respond effectively when called upon to act. The United Nations must be equipped with the necessary means so that, if need be, it can effectively respond to emergency situations in such a way as to minimize the loss of life and to mitigate human suffering and the destruction of property. Though we are aware that it is, first and foremost, the responsibility of each State to take care of the victims of the natural disasters and emergencies occurring on its territory, it is equally true that a number of the emergency situations that occur in the developing countries require

international assistance — in addition, of course, to the national efforts.

While we recognize the role of the international community in general and that of the United Nations system in particular in handling a number of emergency situations throughout the world, it is our considered view that the international community should also turn its attention to the question of capacity-building for developing countries, which could allow for disaster prevention and for adequate preparedness to respond in a steadfast manner whenever an emergency operation is necessary.

Building internal capacity helps to ease the process of coordination between the government of the affected country and the United Nations system, which, in most cases, plays a leading role in coordinating the efforts of the international community. The lack of support for the building of the national capacity in this field has resulted in a situation in which international organizations unwillingly take on the tasks of national institutions in their effort to remedy the situation in the field. Sometimes, when the crisis is over, there remains a vacuum. We feel therefore that something must be done, since we also believe that the affected countries need to be equipped to operate and must be given the necessary means to fill the vacuum.

Our experience in Mozambique is that the magnitude of the impact of the many natural disasters — cyclones, floods and droughts — that have afflicted the country time and again over the past two decades could have been minimized if the country had had adequate resources and the needed expertise to monitor the situation on a permanent basis.

Humanitarian and disaster relief assistance programmes must provide a link to medium- and longer-term development assistance for the developing countries in response to the commitments undertaken in favour of economic growth and the sustainable development of developing countries.

Only sound and sustainable development will ensure that the developing countries will be able to build up their internal capacity for disaster prevention and prepare them to face the challenges of natural disasters and other phenomena responsible for emergency situations. The failure to address accordingly the issue of the support needed for economic growth and sustainable development would perpetuate the problems arising from economic development, which in turn exacerbate emergency situations in a number of developing countries.

May I turn my attention now to the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to Mozambique (A/49/387). We wish first of all to commend the Secretary-General for this report, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with the relevant organs of the United Nations system in pursuance of the humanitarian assistance programmes for the period 1992-1994.

The prospect of lasting peace and stability in the country prepares the way for a comprehensive outlining of ways and means of tackling, in a resolute manner, the question of humanitarian assistance to Mozambique, a country which for so many years has suffered from the combined effects of war and natural disasters.

It is worth noting that since the signing of the general peace agreement two years ago, humanitarian assistance programmes have, for the first time, been able to reach large segments of the population in need throughout the country, in terms not only of food relief but also of non-food-relief items and basic services.

As is well documented in the report under consideration, basic requirements such as seed and tool distribution, health-care services, education and water-supply projects formed an important component of the Government's emergency programme well before the signing of the Rome peace accord. To that end, the Government has set up emergency response units in some of the most relevant ministries, such as those of health, education and social welfare, in order to ensure closer monitoring by the central Government of the whole process of humanitarian assistance programmes in Mozambique.

In fact, after the signing of the General Peace Agreement the Government put in place a comprehensive plan for national reconstruction, which embraces the rehabilitation of both the economic and the social sectors, including the reintegration and resettlement of returnees and internally displaced persons. The implementation of this plan will certainly allow the resumption of economic activities in the countryside and will encourage refugees and displaced persons to return to their places of origin or other places of their choice, where they can lead a normal life.

In addition to commendable efforts by the international community that have been under way to ease the emergency situation in the country, the end of war made it imperative to convene a donors' conference at Rome in December 1992, among whose main objectives

was mobilizing resources for post-war programming in support of the resettlement and reintegration of returning refugees, internally displaced persons and demobilized soldiers. At this juncture, I want to reiterate my Government's gratitude to the donor community at large for the unfailing solidarity and continued support it has extended to our people.

Whilst on one hand we highly appreciate the efforts by the international community in support of our consolidated humanitarian assistance programme, on the other hand we feel that if the solutions provided are to endure, there must be an intrinsic link between emergency relief and the continuum to rehabilitation and development. Our desire to speed up the process of reintegration must be backed up with concrete measures aimed at ensuring self-sustaining capacity through development.

Another issue in the process of reintegration into normal life of millions of the most affected Mozambicans is the need for a speedy conclusion of mine-clearance, which will enable peasants to resume agricultural production in rural areas without fear. We recognize that this task is delicate, but it is also enormous, given the extension of the likely areas affected by land-mines. In this respect, we wish therefore to reiterate the appeal made by His Excellency Mr. Pascoal Mocumbi, Foreign Minister of Mozambique, in his address to the General Assembly at the forty-ninth session, for the international community to increase its generous assistance in the form of financial, material and technical support and, of course, in the form of the expertise needed for mine-clearance in Mozambique, in the light of General Assembly resolution 48/7 of 19 October 1993, on assistance in mine clearance.

I wish to reiterate my Government's readiness to continue to work closely with the United Nations and the international community in general on all major aspects of humanitarian assistance to Mozambique, and also wish to express our gratitude to all Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which have rendered assistance to Mozambique. I appeal to them to continue to do so, for the magnitude of our needs remains beyond our reach.

Finally, with regard to the draft resolution on assistance to Mozambique introduced on 23 November 1994 by the delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group, I want to announce that the Republic of Portugal has joined the sponsors of the draft resolution, which my delegation highly appreciates.

Mr. Rowe (Australia): Within the large number of sub-items with which we deal under agenda item 37, one issue stands out: the reality that our collective capacity "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom", can never be fulfilled without our addressing, collectively, the tragic circumstances of displaced persons, refugees and those affected by the onset of sudden natural disasters. The scale of human misery involved, the sad waste of human life, often in sickeningly large proportion, the wasted opportunities and the lost productive output are compelling reasons for us to invigorate our efforts in humanitarian emergency assistance. Simply, our responses to emergencies must be made as effective as possible.

Australia takes very seriously its role in working for comprehensive solutions to humanitarian needs. We have an extensive history of assisting both our immediate neighbours and those more distant from Australia. Our assistance ranges from programmes of preparedness and response for the victims of natural disasters — for example, cyclones in the South Pacific — to significant levels of assistance for Rwanda — for example, the supply of skilled engineers to assist in the rehabilitation of the water supply. Our assistance is provided through a range of measures, including support for United Nations agencies. Australians have a proven track record of working in the field in a variety of situations, to provide assistance to those in need.

But we are not prepared to rest on this record. We are conscious of the shifting pattern of humanitarian emergencies and the increasing prevalence of so-called complex humanitarian emergencies, factors which are redefining the nature and extent of refugee and emergency assistance and posing new challenges for all of us.

As a result, Australia recently undertook a major review of its humanitarian relief programmes in order to achieve greater relevance and focus and to improve our capacity to work effectively with others, including United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. We have embarked on our own internal processes to improve coordination among relevant actors, to upgrade the professionalism of involved staff and to improve our procedures for determining and assessing our assistance.

Australia has consistently emphasized the importance it attaches to improving the effectiveness of United Nations efforts in the coordination of humanitarian assistance. The United Nations so often plays a pivotal

role in bringing together the framework for an appropriate response by the international community. Its relevance, its effectiveness, its delivery capacity and its efficiency are important features of the global response. Unless all parts of the system are operating effectively, our capacity to serve will be reduced.

We welcome the efforts made by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and by the United Nations agencies members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, in improving their capacity to provide humanitarian assistance, particularly at the field level, as demonstrated in the report of the Secretary-General. We acknowledge with deep appreciation the work of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs under the outstanding leadership of Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen. We hope that he will continue his programme of consultations among Member States on humanitarian coordination issues.

Specifically, Australia can endorse the measures relating to strengthening field coordination in complex emergencies and the continued use of the interest rate of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund for funding rapid coordination arrangements in the field. With regard to additional funding for the Fund, while we appreciate the need for a clearer picture on the operation of the Fund, we recognize that the Fund has no ceiling and that additional contributions would be welcome from a larger group of contributors.

Given the rapidly changing circumstances, we believe it is essential for all those involved in humanitarian assistance to be vigilant about the effectiveness of that effort. We are currently seeing the benefit of efforts over the past 12 months to improve the capabilities of the United Nations system through the role of the relatively new Department of Humanitarian Affairs. In the next 12 months we will be looking to make assessments of this effort. It will be up to the system itself to demonstrate that the present coordinated approach is the most effective one. We are pleased that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) have made a start in grappling with such difficult issues as displaced persons, rehabilitation of child soldiers and demining. We look for further progress to be made on these issues and on field-level coordination over the next 12 months.

There are a large number of draft proposals before us on this item, which illustrates the importance of meeting the needs of humanitarian assistance and the urgency of

focusing attention on specific country situations. Australia will play its part in arriving at decisions broadly acceptable to all and will give whatever assistance we can to the Permanent Representative of Austria, in his role as Vice-President, as he chairs our discussions on the draft proposals.

Mr. Melamed (Israel): Israel has carefully studied the Secretary-General's report on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations. On behalf of my delegation, I wish to express our appreciation to the many organizations and United Nations agencies that are responding to the growing challenges posed by humanitarian crises. Their efforts are especially important in the face of the

"rapid increase in the magnitude and scope of such crises", (A/49/177, para. 3)

described in the Secretary-General's report.

We share the concerns generated by the new challenges to effective humanitarian action: an increasing number of humanitarian crises, flagrant disregard for human rights in afflicted areas, intentional targeting of relief workers for attack, deliberate acts to prevent relief from reaching suffering populations, shortages of resources and financing for humanitarian assistance — and on and on.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Israel seeks to contribute, within its limited resources, to the united efforts to confront these challenges. Our emergency and ongoing humanitarian assistance has brought Israeli know-how, expertise and equipment to the aid of suffering populations in places as diverse as Cambodia, Armenia, Moldova, Georgia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and others. In the case of Rwanda, for example, Israel was the first country to establish and operate a field hospital in Goma, Zaire, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international organizations, to care for thousands of Rwandan refugees. During its activity, close to 3000 patients were treated in the emergency room, and over 2500 were hospitalized. Mindful of the importance of cooperation in fostering the success of humanitarian activities, Israel maintained regular contact with the civilian-military coordinating team of the UNHCR, which assisted in finding a location for the hospital. The effort was also

coordinated with the Zairian authorities, who provided the site for the hospital.

We are currently exploring ways of increasing our involvement in United Nations peace-keeping operations. In this regard, we place great emphasis on the humanitarian aspects of such undertakings. We have considered a number of possible avenues of involvement and have advised the United Nations of our willingness, in principle, to contribute a fully staffed field hospital for service with one of the United Nations peace-keeping operations, possibly in Africa.

Israel welcomes the role played by the Department for Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and other United Nations agencies in enhancing the coordination of United Nations activities. In the light of the recent humanitarian crises throughout the world, we believe that there is a clear need to respond quickly in order to save human lives and prevent the further deterioration of already intolerable conditions. We therefore fully support the assigning of high priority to strengthening the emergency preparedness and response capability of the United Nations system.

Anti-personnel land-mines planted during times of armed conflict and left after the conflict is over have caused many tragedies for a great number of civilians. The proliferation of land-mines has had tragic consequences. It is estimated that more than 85 million uncharted land-mines are now scattered over 62 countries. Addressing the worldwide effort to reduce the damage caused by anti-personnel land-mines, Israel has decided upon a moratorium of two years on their transfer. During this period, Israel will work with other interested parties to review the establishment of a permanent regime for banning the transfer of anti-personnel land-mines. In addition to the two year moratorium, Israel offers its know-how, assistance and training in mine clearance to all interested parties.

We believe it is essential not only to respond quickly and effectively in emergency situations, but also to encourage measures designed to minimize their occurrence or to reduce the severity of their consequences when they do occur. In this regard, I wish to emphasize the inherent connection between democracy and disaster prevention and relief.

The report of the Secretary-General notes a "dramatic increase" (A/49/177, para. 1) in emergencies involving civil and ethnic strife and the flagrant disregard for human

rights. By encouraging democratization we can reduce the risk of being forced to confront such emergencies in the future. Democratization is tied directly to the establishment of peace, stability and respect for human rights. Never has one democracy made war upon another. This is not the result of chance; rather, it stems from the very nature of democratic government, which puts the people's destinies in their own hands and is attentive to the people's yearnings for peace and prosperity.

The openness of democratic societies safeguards the human rights of its citizens. It also ensures that Governments will be responsive to the needs of the people, thereby encouraging quicker, more efficient responses to all forms of disaster. The open debate and self-criticism found in democratic societies act as a safeguard against situations in which the Government puts its interests above those of its citizens and thereby exacerbates the severity of crises and their consequences.

Israel looks forward to joining the consensus on the draft resolutions before us. We are also pleased to have been one of the sponsors of a number of resolutions on humanitarian matters, during this session. We view this as an expression of our great concern for the issue, as well as an indication of our readiness to cooperate with the international community in providing assistance to the suffering people throughout the world.

Mr. Yeltchenko (Ukraine) (*interpretation from Russian*): First of all, the delegation of Ukraine would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report on the item under discussion, an item which undoubtedly deserves greater attention from the international community. Ukraine shares the opinion expressed here concerning the need to strengthen the United Nations response to emergency situations, be they natural or man-made disasters. Effective and timely assistance by the international community in such emergency humanitarian situations or assistance in overcoming the consequences of military and political, or ethnic and civil conflicts is a prerequisite for subsequent action to promote economic recovery and development.

In recent years, we have witnessed the establishment of new coordination machinery in the area of the international community's response to emergency situations. Although we recognize the need for additional measures to improve coordination, on the basis of the guiding principles contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182, we can, nevertheless, note with

satisfaction that the efforts of the last two years to coordinate international humanitarian assistance are starting to yield concrete results. The documents submitted for our consideration, and in particular the reports of the Secretary-General under the symbols A/49/177 and Add.1, attest to the great amount of work done to improve United Nations activity with regard to emergency humanitarian assistance. As a whole, we share the conclusions and recommendations contained in these reports.

In our view, the activity of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is equally deserving of praise. We note the efforts made by the Department to strengthen the United Nations ability to provide a rapid response to emergency situations, in particular the establishment of a central register of potential emergencies, a support team for afflicted countries, field management groups and special rapid response groups.

In addition, important work is being carried out to establish an early-warning system for humanitarian crises, which we hope will be ready for use in the near future.

Recently the activities of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee have been more productive. We consider that the recommendations approved by this body with a view to strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the field have been well thought out and comprehensive and should be implemented.

One of the most complex problems facing the United Nations in ensuring effective action in connection with the growing number of natural disasters is the lack of the necessary financial resources. In the view of our delegation, it is high time to give serious thought to the possibility of increasing the funds of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, while retaining its voluntary nature. The Fund could be expanded along different lines, for example, through voluntary contributions in kind.

Also worthy of attention is the proposal to increase sources of financing for humanitarian operations at the initial stage. We hope that the General Assembly will approve the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the use of machinery for financing the coordination of a rapid response to emergency situations through the interest on income received by the Central Emergency Revolving Fund.

We cannot forget that for many people of the world the international community, as represented by the United

Nations in its role of provider of assistance, is often their only remaining hope.

Ukraine, which eight years ago itself experienced the nightmare of the Chernobyl disaster clearly understands the nature of emergency situations and how important timely support from other countries is in resolving the plethora of problems they cause. In the years following the disaster, the international community gave considerable assistance to Ukraine in eliminating the consequences of the Chernobyl tragedy. I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all countries, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, scientists and experts, and to all of those who came to our assistance during that difficult time.

However, Chernobyl is not a thing of the past. The problems it has created will continue for many years and will require ever-increasing means and efforts to overcome them.

Unfortunately, within this Organization, the problems of the Chernobyl disaster have recently more often than not been pushed to the background. I should like once again to emphasize that Ukraine is not in a position to cope with the onerous consequences of the accident without the assistance of the international community. This is why we will be trying to revive United Nations interest in the problem of Chernobyl and to ensure realistic programmes for international cooperation in this sphere.

I should like, in particular, to dwell on something that is a growing problem for Ukraine and a number of other States. It is the problem of the coordination of efforts in the area of special economic assistance to countries and regions which are suffering from the imposition of sanctions. In recent years, in connection with the active use by the United Nations Security Council of economic measures of a coercive nature, as an important means of international efforts to settle regional conflicts, the problem of the adverse effects of sanctions on the whole and their impact on third countries, in particular, has acquired a qualitatively new aspect. A striking example of this is the imposition of sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The urgent need to render assistance to countries which have suffered as a result of the implementation of the embargo regime and to resolve their specific economic problems is almost universally acknowledged,

but in our view, this is clearly not enough. We need bold and concrete proposals, and adequate practical steps by the organs and agencies of the United Nations system.

The United Nations Security Council is imposing sanctions on behalf of the entire international community and therefore all States must bear the responsibility for their implementation and their consequences. In our view, in order to enhance the responsibility of States for taking such decisions, prior to consideration by the Security Council of resolutions on the introduction of coercive measures in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, there is a need to make use of consultation machinery with third countries. These would include countries bordering on the State which is the violator of international law, States which are regional neighbours and other States, for example, which have traditional trade or economic ties with the country in question.

Ukraine, like other neighbours of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, is bearing a triple burden as a result of the application of the United Nations embargo regime against that State. The traditional markets for products have virtually disappeared. Economic and business ties with Yugoslav partners have been broken. The normal rhythm of transport of cargo on the Danube has been upset and, what is more, the States of the region have the added responsibility for monitoring compliance with the sanctions regime, which also requires significant expenditure. The adverse effects of sanctions are gradually becoming chronic and long term.

As a result our economic losses now account for approximately \$4 billion. Ukraine now is not in a position in which it can allow the loss of millions of dollars every month. Therefore we shall firmly work for a solution to the problem of the granting of effective assistance to the States that are suffering.

The delegation of Ukraine has carefully studied the Secretary-General's report (A/49/356) entitled "Economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)", which in our view forms a good basis for further analysis and discussion of the given problem. At the same time the document under consideration lacks an assessment of the effectiveness of collective action by the United Nations system in response to the appeals that were made to the Organization on the recommendation of the Security Council. In our view there is a need, on the basis of

analysis of the Yugoslav experience, to propose universal recommendations and constructive ideas to alleviate the negative consequences of sanctions in the future.

We support the basic conceptual conclusion contained in the report, that the total adverse impact of sanctions on individual countries and regions is such that their mitigation and overcoming will require the political will of Member States and a concerted and multifaceted response from the international community. We are obliged to note with regret that so far few have demonstrated such will. This doubtless runs counter to the fundamental provisions of the United Nations Charter, in particular Article 49, which states

"The Members of the United Nations shall join in affording mutual assistance in carrying out the measures decided upon by the Security Council."

It is precisely for this reason, in our view, that the key provisions of General Assembly resolution A/48/210 have not been fully implemented.

Ukraine, conscientiously implementing its obligations in accordance with the United Nations Charter and considering United Nations sanctions as an inalienable element of international efforts to find a peaceful settlement of the Yugoslav crisis, favours adequate and effective assistance by the international system to resolve special economic problems.

We shall continue to insist on the adoption of effective measures in this area which would strengthen and supplement the previous decisions adopted by the United Nations. A first step in this direction is, in our view, a stepping up of trade with the States which have suffered, an expansion of the flow of investments to their economy and the development of alternative and communication infrastructures. Particular attention should be paid to resolving macroeconomic problems and also to questions of a social nature. We are also counting on the fact that the United Nations will strengthen and expand cooperation with international financial institutions, regional organizations and the Governments of donor States to mobilize additional resources to assist the countries that have suffered.

Otherwise, the trust of United Nations Member States in the institution of sanctions will be undermined once and for all, and that in turn will call into question the principle of collective action to implement the United Nations measures.

Mr. Munyampeta (Rwanda) (*interpretation from French*): On 6 October the Head of State of Rwanda, His Excellency Mr. Pasteur Bizimungu, had the opportunity, on behalf of our delegation, to congratulate the President most warmly on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly of the Organization at its forty-ninth session. The delegation of Rwanda wishes to reiterate its warm congratulations, this time on the outstanding skill with which he is conducting our work.

It is an honour for me to speak before this lofty Assembly, to make the modest contribution of the delegation of Rwanda to the debate on sub-item (f) of agenda item 37, "Emergency international assistance for a solution to the problem of refugees, the restoration of total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development in war-stricken Rwanda".

At the outset, the delegation of Rwanda wishes, on behalf of the Government and the people of Rwanda, to express its deep gratitude for the interest shown with regard to the consideration of this additional item, submitted by my country on the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the Assembly.

As a brief history, which is useful to outline, on the origins of the Rwandan problem, the international community will recall the painful events of the years 1959-1960 which forced thousands of Rwandan citizens belonging to the Tutsi socio-ethnic group into exile.

From the independence of Rwanda, on 1 July 1962, to the outbreak of war on 1 October 1990 the republican regime established by the Bahutu was never able to find a just, equitable or lasting solution to the problem of refugees, whose long exile has lasted a sad 35 years. Without doubt therein lies the macabre origin of what is called the "Rwandan tragedy", following the long war in Rwanda and the turns of events which the international community has followed.

Those in exile fought to restore their inalienable right to return and to live in their ancestral land, a common heritage of all Rwandans.

Under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity, the countries of the Great Lakes subregion of Africa started a peace process with which later the United Nations and a number of Western countries would associate themselves. I wish to express our gratitude for their invaluable support to Rwanda.

The peace process took place in the form of negotiations which led to the important Arusha Peace Agreement, signed on 4 October 1993 in the United Republic of Tanzania.

The establishment of a genuine state of law in Rwanda, strict respect for the rights of the human person, the sharing of power, the establishment of a national army without discrimination, the promotion of democracy and of inter-ethnic symbiosis, as well as the triggering of the dynamic of national reconciliation, are the main elements of the Arusha Peace Agreement.

Since its birth at Arusha the Peace Agreement has suffered many vicissitudes that impeded its comprehensive implementation.

It is deplorable that the spirit and hope of Arusha, which enabled the international community to breathe a sigh of relief, has been betrayed by the regime of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development — Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (MRND-CDR), which was responsible for the renewed outbreak of hostilities after the death of the former President, Juvenal Habyarimana, on 6 April 1994.

The Rwandan tragedy culminated — and I am not saying anything that is not well known — with the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi ethnic group and the other losses of life. This deprived Rwanda of much of its national spirit, emanating from the common will to live together. The sickness that has overtaken Rwanda is as much mental as physical. An invaluable treasure, bearing the age-old culture and story of the Rwandan people, the spirit of the Rwandan nation has been diminished by the war and has been traumatized in various ways.

Devastated by a relentless four-year war, Rwanda finds itself economically, financially and socially drained. As I am sure the Assembly will understand, it deserves to receive an intravenous shot and an oxygen mask from the international community.

My country turns to the international community, represented here, and asks it to be generous in helping Rwanda heal its mental and physical wounds.

From the economic standpoint, everything must be done or redone to redress the disastrous situation in the agricultural sector, which employs 96 per cent of the population, the devastation of the thin industrial fabric of

the country, the dismantling of the skilled-labour sector and the cooperatives, and the destruction of a large number of pieces of equipment and socio-economic and administrative structures. Buildings, schools, nutrition and health centres, hospitals, factories and other parts of the economic and socio-cultural infrastructure have been destroyed, looted or damaged.

There is a vital need for the reforestation of the country to preserve the balance of the ecosystem, which has been greatly disturbed by large population movements and the degradation of the ecological heritage. Agricultural tools, fertilizers and seed are lacking in a country that is rather poor and overpopulated and that, from April to the present, has lost two farming seasons. The country had a flourishing energy system, thanks to the good working order of the hydroelectric stations, but it has now broken down and drinking water has become very rare.

From the point of view of human resources, the serious consequences of the genocide and the other losses of life have deprived Rwanda of many elements necessary for development. To paraphrase an idea of Alfred Sauvy, the internationally known economist and demographer, there are some who contend that underdevelopment is caused less by the lack of natural resources than by the lack of a well-trained managerial staff. It is regrettable that after all the effort that has gone into the training of staff, it has been decimated, mutilated or driven into exile. Hence, Rwanda needs technical assistance in various spheres of development, owing to the lack or insufficiency of well-trained managerial staff at a time of broad reconstruction. In their various categories, the Rwandan refugees number in the millions — and we must add to this the thousands of war-displaced people, widows and widowers, orphans, the disabled, the rejected — all needing subsidies and socio-professional reintegration.

The economist and political writer Jean Bodin left us this thought: "The real wealth lies in the people". On the threshold of the twenty-first century, we can note with satisfaction that the international community is paying tribute to that thought by making man the centre, the driving force and the final purpose of development. In this context, we must pay tribute also to the Secretary-General, whose Agenda for Development re-establishes the role and the place of man as the alpha and omega of development.

Those examples show why Rwanda will for a long time suffer the serious consequences of the genocide and the other losses of life in all social sectors, including the

country's élite groups. Can this material and moral void be filled?

From the humanitarian standpoint, the situation is even more disastrous now than it was when the Department of Humanitarian Affairs made an inter-institutional appeal in April 1993 — an appeal repeated on 22 July 1994 by the United Nations for the benefit of the victims of the Rwandan crisis.

We must mention the drafting of the plan for the urgent normalization of the situation in Rwanda, which sets forth the areas in which financial, material and technical assistance will be initially necessary.

The Rwandan delegation expresses its deep gratitude to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to draw the international community's attention to the very grave humanitarian crisis throughout Rwanda.

We also sincerely thank the neighbouring countries and all other countries, the bodies of the United Nations system, the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and various individuals for their humanitarian assistance to Rwanda and to its countless refugees and war-displaced people, both before and after the renewed outbreak of hostilities from April to July 1994.

The Government of National Unity, installed last July, has shouldered the enormous burden of national reconciliation, but it finds itself facing the intransigence of the forces of the former Government, which are hostile to the voluntary return of refugees. Chaos and terror reign in the Rwandese refugee camps.

The delegation of Rwanda bitterly deplores the delay in setting up the International Tribunal for Rwanda competent to try persons suspected of serious violations of international humanitarian law in Rwanda, those responsible for genocide. Clearly, by bringing to justice persons who have committed and/or encouraged genocide, the international community would contribute to hastening national reconciliation in Rwanda. To avoid the scandal of a system of double standards with regard to the flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, and to avert the danger of other cases similar to that of Rwanda, the international community must support the Government of Rwanda in judging those responsible for genocide.

The reconstruction of the economic, social, educational and administrative infrastructures is one of the gigantic tasks facing the Government and people of Rwanda, who are seeking emergency and increased assistance from the international community. Donor organizations have carried out the preliminary planning necessary before assistance can be provided for reconstruction projects and for checking and restoring basic infrastructures.

Rwanda is beseeching donor Governments, international bodies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to ensure the speedy implementation of their assistance programmes. My country's economic and financial disaster is such that the Government lacks the funds to restore even the most rudimentary administrative structure or to pay its personnel. There is therefore a need, indisputably urgent, to organize at least some stopgap assistance in the form of subsidies bilaterally and/or through international financial institutions.

This is the time and the place for me to express the deep gratitude of the delegation of Rwanda to the United Nations Secretary-General for his interim report (S/1994/1133) of 6 October 1994 to the Security Council. The report eloquently describes the urgent need for increased multilateral assistance for Rwanda from the international community.

The delegation of Rwanda would be remiss if it did not also reiterate its deep gratitude to the General Assembly for having adopted by consensus resolution 48/211 of 21 December 1993, "Emergency assistance for the socio-economic rehabilitation of Rwanda."

When the General Assembly considers the draft resolution (A/49/L.24/Rev.1) on my country bilateral donors will have a chance to study ways and means of assisting the Government of Rwanda to solve the problem of its arrears in payments to the World Bank, so that it may have access to that institution's resources.

Here I should like to express my deep thanks, and the thanks of the Government and people of Rwanda, to all the many countries that have sponsored that draft resolution, as well as to the international community for its support. The text of the draft resolution includes all the very useful suggestions made by a number of delegations from various regional groups. Once again, we thank them all.

The Assembly's kind consideration of the Rwandan question will support the request to Member States to contribute generously to the special Trust Fund established on 14 July this year to finance humanitarian relief and rehabilitation programmes under way in Rwanda.

In conclusion, it is appropriate to recall here the universal wisdom of the saying "Heaven helps those who help themselves." The people of Rwanda recognize the truth of that wise adage. They are doing everything they can to ensure that the assistance provided by the international community will be supplementary and not an end in itself.

Therefore, the Government of Rwanda is concerned with the implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement, and with all its implications for national reconciliation, so that all members of Rwandese society may regain mutual trust and return to work for the country's self-development.

If all beginnings must also have an end, then the tragedy of Rwanda is at the beginning of the end. In order to end it once and for all, the Rwandese people must themselves forge the key to their better future.

However, to enhance its present and build its future, my country, which has been bled white, needs international emergency assistance to solve the problem of its refugees, restore total peace and carry out the rehabilitation and socio-economic development of war-torn Rwanda.

Mrs. Hassan (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The delegation of Egypt would like at the outset to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations contained in document A/49/177 and Add.1. We would like also to express our thanks to the Department for Humanitarian Affairs and the Secretariat, and in particular Mr. Peter Hansen, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for his introductory statement and for his efforts and those of all the members of his staff devoted to the provision of humanitarian assistance in various parts of the world.

The various reports on the sub-items of this item clearly indicate a deterioration of the humanitarian situation in many parts of the world. This indicates that greater efforts are needed to mitigate the suffering of the

countries stricken by man-made or natural disasters, to assist them in overcoming the crises they face and to provide them with the necessary assistance they need in order for them to rehabilitate and develop. The setting-up of an advisory board by the Secretary-General consisting of eminent personalities from different parts of the world testifies to the importance attached by the United Nations to the mitigation of natural disasters and to developing a clear vision of the measures necessary for dealing with those disasters, either in the area of prevention or of mitigating the effects of such disasters.

The delegation of Egypt wishes to seize this opportunity to express appreciation and thanks to the international community for the solidarity and support extended to the Egyptian Government in dealing with the consequences of the torrential rains that swept the southern part of Egypt last month. Those rains caused great damage, destroyed whole villages and displaced their surviving inhabitants. The situation requires major efforts to mitigate the suffering of the people and to rebuild the destroyed villages, in order to repatriate and rehabilitate the displaced persons and to make possible the resumption of normal life after the havoc wreaked by the rains and the resultant destruction of vital facilities that have to be rebuilt.

The Egyptian Government immediately took all measures to provide relief to the people affected, and have laid down an integrated plan to mitigate the consequences of the disaster and to rehabilitate and develop the stricken areas. The plan is being implemented by the Egyptian authorities in cooperation with the international community.

The convening of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, Japan, in May 1994 and the Plan of Action it adopted to coordinate humanitarian assistance and international relief at both the national and international levels, represent a strengthening of the relief mechanisms and an advanced step towards more international cooperation in achieving integration between relief efforts, rehabilitation and development, the three principal components of any effort to restore normal life to stricken areas, and to proceed from relief to development.

Egypt's delegation wishes in this context, to seize the opportunity to reaffirm the importance of strengthening the Department for Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations, as it is the focal point for the coordination of the humanitarian and emergency relief provided by the Organization.

We have listened with great interest to the statement by the representative of Rwanda, in which he set out the major political and humanitarian developments in his country, and the efforts being deployed by his Government to restore normal life and to encourage the return of approximately 2 million refugees to their villages.

These are efforts that require financial and technical support by the international community in order for them to succeed. In that regard, I should like to affirm Egypt's support for the implementation of the plan of action proposed by the Rwandese Government, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Organization of African Unity, to deal with the crisis in Rwanda from a regional perspective and in accordance with the Arusha agreement.

Egypt's delegation also wishes to reiterate its full support for the new phase of the mission currently undertaken by the United Nations in Rwanda, wherein the focus is on the rehabilitation and repatriation of the returnees and displaced persons, instead of the mere provision of emergency humanitarian relief. The success of such a task requires support for the Rwandese Government in light of the need in all parts of the country for rebuilding the facilities that have been completely destroyed by war. This, as of necessity, calls for more efforts to bring about national reconciliation, tolerance and understanding between all factions of the people, an undertaking wherein the role of information is paramount.

The political events that took place in Rwanda and the conflicts and bloody massacres that ensued and claimed the lives of about a million people make it necessary for the international community to study in depth the role the United Nations must play and the timing of the efforts it deploys if the Organization is to ensure that the human disaster that took place in Rwanda should never happen again.

The hesitation of the international community in taking a decision to intervene and put an end to the violence in Rwanda at the proper time has contributed, regrettably, to a further deterioration of the situation and the resultant displacement of more than 2 million refugees; this placed an additional burden on the United Nations that could have been much lighter had the decision to intervene been taken at the appropriate time.

Egypt's delegation wishes to reiterate its support for the Rwandese people in its efforts to rebuild its country, and calls upon all Member States to contribute to the rehabilitation programmes either by contributing to the special fund set up by the Secretary-General for that purpose or through bilateral assistance programmes.

Egypt, for its part, will continue to provide the Rwandese people with technical and humanitarian assistance in order to enable it to overcome its present plight, rebuild the structures of its state and restore the stability that Rwanda needs to regain its place in the African and the international family of nations.

Mr. Szymanski (Poland): At the outset, I should like to thank the Secretariat for the comprehensive documentation provided under this agenda item, and especially for the report of the Secretary-General in document A/49/177, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".

My delegation appreciates the efforts of the United Nations system as a whole, as well as those of other humanitarian entities and non-governmental organizations, in responding with humanitarian assistance to the needs of many countries. The problem of delivering such assistance is becoming much more multifaceted in an era experiencing a rapid increase in the magnitude and scope of "complex emergencies", an increase that has called for a response. This reflects the need for concerted action to enhance the capacity of the international community to respond to these crises.

It is true that the international relief system is under severe strain, facing burgeoning demands, and that international operations are becoming more dangerous. This implies that we have an obligation to work out a clearer definition of the respective roles and responsibilities of the various entities involved, better analyses of emergency situations and assessment of needs. On the other hand, it is still crucially important to ensure the security of international personnel and relief supplies as well as the proper distribution of such supplies.

We fully agree that the strategies and working methods at Headquarters and at the field level should permit an appropriate and timely emergency response, and we are aware that the coordination of the work of all actors in the process of the delivery of humanitarian assistance needs to be improved.

My delegation therefore fully supports ideas for such an improvement, based on a rational approach leading to enhanced coordination and effectiveness of work and a better use of allocated resources. We believe that a positive role is played by the system whereby the Emergency Relief Coordinator, supported by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, is provided with such coordination mechanisms as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, composed of the executive heads of relevant humanitarian organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund, the consolidated appeal process and the Early Warning System supplement the existing structure and make it more responsive. We should proceed towards the elaboration of such a strategy, which will allow for a better connection between the three stages of giving assistance: relief and emergency assistance, reconstruction and rehabilitation and, finally, sustainable development.

Situations in which a consolidated response by the international community is becoming extremely important have many sources. The increase in the overall impact of disasters in recent years indicates the need to strengthen preventive and preparedness measures.

The initiatives, ideas and programmes of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) were warmly welcomed and supported by the Government of Poland. After five years of Decade-related activities, we very much appreciate its accomplishments. The goals of the Decade have a positive and inspiring impact on the work being initiated in a number of countries, including Poland. The Decade-related activities have been important in creating a basis for better organization of preventive activities.

Poland has now reached a transition stage, in which the centrally controlled economy has been transformed into a free market economy, with a new ownership structure and the domination of private property. Socio-economic changes have caused a need for profound modifications in the system of disaster prevention.

In 1992, under the auspices of the Polish IDNDR Committee, the National Plan of Action in the Domain of the Prevention of Natural Disasters and Other Extraordinary Emergency States in the Territory of the Republic of Poland was elaborated. The main task under the Plan was the elaboration of a long-term programme for the reduction of losses caused by natural and

technological disasters. The most hazardous zones in the country have been identified, and the assessment of potential losses has almost been completed; nevertheless, more sophisticated hazard and loss evaluation is lacking. Short-term protective and early intervention measures have been identified and relatively well organized at both the national and local levels.

There are some long-term preventive plans. However, their effectiveness is doubtful, and their implementation difficult, due to the lack of financial resources. Such plans will need improvement and reorganization.

It is expected that implementing the project on Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at the Local Level, sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme, will increase community awareness and emergency response at the local level. Unified structures, organizational procedures for prevention, warning systems and monitoring are still lacking, however.

In the light of current developments concerning the Decade's tasks, any tendency to expand the scope of activities undertaken within the Decade should be firmly opposed. Activities ought to be concentrated strictly on the prevention and alleviation of the consequences of natural phenomena.

It seems to be necessary to continue efforts to determine precisely concepts and definitions of natural disasters. It might be useful to establish a team or working group to revise existing terminology and define supplementary terms. For instance, the term "natural disaster" seems less precise than "disaster caused by natural phenomena".

The arguments and rhetoric over disaster prevention and rescue work should be replaced by concrete action to prevent and repair damage caused by natural hazards. Models, scenarios and profit-and-loss analysis of actions under way should be used to evaluate costs of prevention. Quantitative characteristic and risk assessments, with the application of scientific methods, should be implemented.

We should remember that the ecological disaster affecting human beings is also causing the degradation of our planet. Therefore, we should strive for a free exchange of information on the occurrence of hazards and their effects, know-how systems for forecasting and prevention, and modern technologies for safe industrial production aimed at minimizing technological risks.

The United Nations system, in cooperation with intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies and other humanitarian partners, should better prepare itself to respond to the complexity and range of humanitarian emergencies. Further efforts should be made to achieve the right balance between humanitarian, peace keeping and peacemaking efforts, as well as human rights and the environment, in order to meet the needs of certain countries.

Poland will cooperate and participate in all these activities.

Mr. Ouch (Cambodia) (*interpretation from French*): Since this is the first time I have had the honour and privilege to address the Assembly in contributing to the debate on this agenda item, I wish, on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, to associate myself with previous speakers who have warmly congratulated Mr. Essy on his election to preside over this session. I am convinced that his leadership will ensure the successful completion of the work on our agenda.

I wish, first, to express our total support for the statement the Algerian delegation made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. My delegation took careful note of the what the Secretary-General's report (A/49/177 and Add.1) says about the detailed evaluation of progress made and measures to be taken in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 46/182, 47/168 and 48/57 and about the specific situation of emergency assistance for afflicted people throughout the world.

I wish to pay tribute to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, headed by Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen, the Economic and Social Council and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for their tireless efforts to deal with the delicate issues affecting the desperate and the afflicted.

My delegation wishes to contribute certain ideas and suggestions aimed at focusing attention on this issue. Consideration of item 37 (a) of the agenda, in accordance with resolution 47/168, is taking place at a time when devastating disasters and brutal conflicts threaten tens of millions of people throughout the world. This situation has given rise to an unprecedented increase in emergency humanitarian situations, which severely taxes the capacity of the United Nations. The strengthening of coordination in this area and the bolstering of financial resources are particularly timely and important.

With regard to the treatment of the question of coordination in respect of emergency humanitarian situations, the experience acquired by the United Nations in Cambodia, where the Organization played an historic and primary role in ending more than 20 years of war, suffering and misery, as well as in other regions of the world, proves that no institution can alone meet the growing needs of humanitarian relief.

In the case of Cambodia, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme and other United Nations specialized agencies, in the framework of the Paris Agreement of 23 October 1991 on Cambodia, as well as the outstanding success of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, leading to general, free and democratic elections, have helped to mitigate the ordeal of some 350,000 refugees, who have returned to their country, and of hundreds of thousands of other Cambodians, who were exposed to danger arising from mines that had been laid during the war.

On the whole, the fruitful reintegration of these refugees will create conditions conducive to the participation of all Cambodian citizens in the development programmes currently being undertaken in our country.

It must be pointed out that the meeting of the International Committee for the Reconstruction of Cambodia, held in Paris on 7 and 9 September 1993, and the follow-up meeting in Tokyo on 10 and 11 March 1994, enabled these participants to plan programmes that must be undertaken and to determine what resources are necessary for the reconstruction of Cambodia. To that end, the donor countries at the meeting have agreed to spend more than \$773 million.

The humanitarian non-governmental organizations have also played a very important role in the reconstruction of Cambodia. I wish to take this opportunity to express my Government's deep thanks to the United Nations, to friendly countries and to non-governmental organization for the timely and selfless assistance that they gave to the martyred Cambodian people. I am thinking particularly of the United States of America and France, which have provided a huge amount of assistance in the area of education and development, and of Japan, which is still providing assistance for the restoration of the communications system.

Bearing in mind the fact that the devastating effects of the recent flooding and of drought are still with us, I wish to appeal to the international community to provide assistance for thousands of afflicted Cambodian families. The activities of the specialized agencies are greatly appreciated in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caucasus region and the former Yugoslavia, where they have come up against huge challenges. However, my delegation notes with deep regret that humanitarian relief activities are being undertaken in more and more dangerous situations, which have produced victims and even caused deaths among humanitarian relief personnel.

In the past few months, tasks in various regions of the world have become increasingly difficult. Some people have even sacrificed their lives in the execution of their mission. We wish to draw special attention to the need for appropriate measures to ensure the safety of personnel.

In several of the complex emergency situations that afflict the world at present, humanitarian assistance has been an integral part of the efforts to maintain peace and security, just as the peace-keeping and peace-building efforts of the United Nations have facilitated access to humanitarian assistance and its distribution. It is therefore important that the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and of other Departments — in particular, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations — be further coordinated with a view to achieving integrated, global and sustainable action. It is in this context that my delegation welcomes the measures to be adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to enhance coordination on the ground in respect of humanitarian assistance in complex emergency situations.

We have also noted with concern that, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, the inadequacy of the resources available to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund persists. We are very grateful to the community of donors and to the relevant international organizations for their willingness to examine this problem seriously. To that situation we must add the well-known serious shortage of financial resources of the United Nations, to which the Secretary-General referred in his statement of 12 October 1994, which confirmed that on 31 August 1994 the Organization had \$375 million available, whereas it needs \$400 million a month to meet its budget expenses and finance its peace-keeping operations. The Kingdom of Cambodia, despite the meagreness of its resources, is committed to meeting its obligations in this

respect. My delegation attaches great importance to draft resolution A/49/L.19, which will enable us to make progress in our efforts to find the best solutions to the pressing problems concerning strengthened coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

I wish, in conclusion, to express the gratitude of the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia to humanitarian emergency relief workers who, often in very difficult and dangerous situations, devote themselves body and soul to helping those in need. Their noble sacrifices deserve our deep appreciation and gratitude.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): I represent one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. In addition to typhoons and storms, the Philippines has suffered earthquakes, flash floods and volcanic eruptions.

Many natural disasters defy accurate prediction, though many are predictable. Whether predictable or unforeseeable, all disasters — ideally — could be anticipated and avoided or prepared for. Preparations for disasters are best based on lessons from the past. Usually the countries that are ready for disasters are those that possess disaster-minimizing technology and the resources to cope with emergency situations. But many developing countries lack such resources. Thus, although the primary responsibility for coping with emergencies lies in the afflicted countries, assistance from States with greater resources is necessary.

For any given emergency, there are certain imperatives: immediate relief, prompt evaluation of damage and coordination of logistical support for the deployment of personnel and the distribution of materials.

However, it is usually the aftermath of disasters that is the most difficult. For communities and nations, growth and development must be pursued despite losses and setbacks.

The founding fathers of the United Nations recognized the importance of humanitarian concerns. It is in this spirit that we are now sharing our efforts during the current International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Any in-depth consideration of natural and man-made disasters should include the following elements: first, prevention; secondly, preparedness; thirdly, emergency management, including early-warning mechanisms, evaluation of damage and of types and sources of aid, coordination of donors and distribution of aid; fourthly, rehabilitation; fifthly, continued development and, sixthly, optimizing the

cooperative, coordinating and leadership role of the United Nations.

Emergency management and rehabilitation are important concerns of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Post-disaster development, however, is a vital undertaking and requires the concerted efforts of the entire United Nations system.

Granted that the United Nations system is doing well in coming to the aid of countries experiencing natural or man-made disasters, we must ask ourselves: whether the system could do any better. In this connection, some questions may be relevant. First, could the assessment of the gravity of a disaster, in terms of injury to or loss of life and property, be accomplished any faster so that, secondly, such assessment could be communicated to the various United Nations programmes and agencies concerned and thus, thirdly, avoid the inadequacy or excess of particular items of aid, overlapping, superfluity and unnecessary costs? Fourthly, should not donor and other countries contribute more to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund?

The level of development of any country determines its capacity either to prevent or to be prepared for any calamity, any disaster. Indeed, very often the root causes of disasters may be traced to the effects of underdevelopment.

The development-relief and rehabilitation-development continuum is of cardinal importance. In this matter, the international community can lend a determined helping hand. The international community did in fact give much thought to natural disasters during the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held at Yokohama, Japan, earlier this year. All countries should seriously support the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action, bearing in mind that natural-disaster reduction contributes immensely to sustainable development. If it is true that an ounce of prevention are more effective than a pound of cure, disaster prevention and mitigation are more effective than humanitarian assistance, despite the importance of such assistance.

The President: We shall hear the remaining speakers in the debate on this item at our next meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly

decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): We have some remarks on the Secretary-General's report now before us in document A/49/207, "International cooperation to mitigate the environmental consequences on Kuwait and other countries in the region resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait," because that report did not give sufficient consideration to the environmental effects of the conflict on Iraq, its people, its land, its waters and its atmosphere.

Everyone knows that that environmental damage continues and, indeed, is being aggravated by the continuing unjustifiable embargo. As one example only I would mention the damage caused by more than 120,000 tons of bombs dropped on Iraq, the equivalent of 8 atomic bombs of the type dropped on Hiroshima, not to mention the resultant systematic destruction of all life-lines in Iraq and its consequences, including the complete destruction of the water-purification, sanitation and sewage systems.

Furthermore, there has been the use by allied forces of prohibited weapon systems such as bombs manufactured from depleted uranium, which have caused and continue to cause the death of large numbers of Iraqi civilians from the radiation and toxic materials released by such bombs, and that is in addition to the widespread environmental damage caused by the continuing embargo and the deterioration of services in the country.

Notwithstanding these remarks, we had hoped that the Secretary-General's report would be debated in an objective manner with the aim of mitigating the harmful effects on the region's environment as a whole. However, most regrettably, the representative of the Kuwaiti regime has gone beyond that commitment and has used this forum to level accusations against my country. Those accusations have no basis in fact or logic. I wonder: Why does the representative of Kuwait imagine that burning and spilling oil into the Gulf is the doing of Iraq and not the action of the allied forces that did bomb oil wells, did bomb loading docks and did bomb docked ships? Furthermore, why did the representative of Kuwait not point his accusing finger at those who sank more than 200 Iraqi civilian and merchant ships, including some giant oil tankers, with all the environmental disaster that ensued? Why did he mention only Iraqi ammunition dumps, and not the

ammunition dumps and mines of foreign forces? Why is it only the Iraqi ammunition dumps that cause environmental damage?

My country has expressed a sincere desire to leave the events of the past behind and overcome the environmental damage caused to the region as a result of the conflict. The representatives of Kuwait should respond to that call responsibly. They should refrain from levelling unjustified accusations.

Mr. Al-Sabah (Kuwait): The facts just stated by the Iraqi representative are not totally accurate, so I would like to set the record straight.

We are all aware of the facts and events that unfolded in the Gulf in 1990 and 1991. We were all witness to the deliberate dumping by Iraq of millions and millions of barrels of oil into the waters of the Gulf as part of a military strategy. This event occurred before the ground military operations had taken place. Again the Iraqi representative stated that the fires in the Kuwaiti oil wells were the result of the war. But we are all aware, and we all saw via all kinds of communication outlets, that the Iraqi regime deliberately set fire to more than 800 oil wells in Kuwait and used that as a military deterrent before the ground war took place.

The facts are clear and history bears witness to them. The Iraqi regime has been and is solely responsible for the environmental deterioration our area is suffering and will continue to suffer in the near and distant future.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I apologize for having asked to speak a second time at this late hour, and I will be very brief. I would like to confirm that this item deals with the coordination of efforts to mitigate the environmental consequences of disasters, be they man-made or natural. No one should use this forum as a place to level accusations or to issue value-judgements.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. Al-Sabah (Kuwait): I will not waste the precious time of this prestigious body. I would just like to state once again that the facts are clear, the whole

international community is a witness to what happened, and we strongly think that the environmental damage that

resulted in the Gulf is and will continue to be the sole responsibility of the Iraqi regime.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.



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Official Records

President: Mr. Essy (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 37 (continued)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

(i) Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/177 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

(ii) Draft resolution (A/49/L.19)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

(i) Reports of the Secretary-General (A/49/158, A/49/263 and Corr.1, A/49/356, A/49/376, A/49/387 and Corr.1, A/49/388, A/49/396, A/49/397, A/49/431, A/49/456, A/49/466, A/49/470, A/49/516, A/49/562, A/49/581, A/49/683)

(ii) Draft resolutions (A/49/L.26, A/49/L.28, A/49/L.30, A/49/L.31, A/49/L.32, A/49/L.34, A/49/L.36, A/49/L.37, A/49/L.39)

(c) International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

(i) Note by the Secretary-General (A/49/453)

(ii) Report of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (A/CONF.172/9 and Add.1)

(iii) Draft resolutions (A/49/L.21, A/49/L.29)

(d) International cooperation to mitigate the environmental consequences on Kuwait and other countries in the region resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait: report of the Secretary-General (A/49/207 and Corr.1)

(f) Emergency international assistance for a solution to the problem of refugees, the restoration of total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development in war-stricken Rwanda: draft resolution (A/49/L.24/Rev.1)

(g) Special assistance to countries receiving refugees from Rwanda: draft resolution (A/49/L.17/Rev.2)

The President (interpretation from French): I wish to draw the attention of members to an additional draft resolution the Assembly has before it under sub-item (b) of agenda item 37, namely, draft resolution A/49/L.39, "Assistance for the reconstruction and development of El Salvador".



Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): The delegation of Brazil has considered with great interest the report presented to the General Assembly pursuant to the requests contained in resolution 48/57 and Economic and Social Council decision 1994/291.

It was with some surprise that we noted that the measures identified by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for enhancing field-level coordination are addressed only to complex emergencies, a specification that was not made in the terms of resolution 48/57. The report goes on to define complex emergencies as those that do not

"fall within the mandate and competence of given United Nations organizations." (*A/49/177/Add.1, para. 10*)

In the view of my delegation, a precise distinction between complex and non-complex emergencies has as yet to be defined. In fact, the difficulties of attempting to determine such a distinction have been specifically avoided in relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, which speak only of natural disasters and other emergencies.

Although the agreed conclusions of the 1993 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council refer to complex emergencies, my delegation has reiterated on several occasions that these conclusions should not be seen as precedents for the specific language of General Assembly resolutions, at the risk of undermining the flexibility inherent in the agreed-conclusions format.

This is all the more relevant when a closer analysis of those agreed conclusions reveals that complex emergencies are portrayed in one instance as those that are not natural disasters, while in another they are described as those that require a system-wide response. It is clear that these alternative definitions are not equivalent, for such an interpretation would be tantamount to saying that natural disasters do not require a systemwide response, an interpretation that would be highly regrettable.

It seems, however, that in presenting a definition of complex emergencies the report only contributes to aggravating this confusion. By defining complex emergencies as those that require coordinated systemwide response and at the same time highlighting the notion that preventive actions for impending complex emergencies are constituted by preventive diplomacy, we are led to believe that complex emergencies are only man-made and that therefore natural disasters can be tackled without a coordinated systemwide response.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has recommended, in compliance with the request contained in resolution 48/57, that the interim mechanism for financing coordination arrangements in the initial stage of an emergency, the use of the interest earned by the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF), be continued. There is, however, very little information on the amount of funds currently available through that mechanism, on the estimated requirements and on the reimbursement record so far of the utilization of CERF interest apart from the fact that \$200,000 has been used in the case of Rwanda.

This information is essential, since the use of interest from CERF would also be on a revolving basis, and yet last year's report clearly identifies field-level coordination costs as those components with the lowest response in the consolidated appeals process. It seems evident that such a measure would still be insufficient as there is an additional proposal for "increased standby funds for quick-response coordination", on which my delegation would appreciate further clarification.

Another area which raises some concern for my delegation relates to the appointment of humanitarian coordinators. Although we welcome the fact that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has come to an agreement on this issue, there are still certain aspects which require clarification.

First, we are given the impression that a humanitarian coordinator will be designated for every complex emergency, whether or not he is already the resident coordinator. This seems to contradict General Assembly resolution 46/182, which states that:

"the resident coordinator should normally coordinate the humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system" (*resolution 46/182, annex, para. 39*).

The fact that the resident coordinator, who is appointed by the Secretary-General with the agreement of the host Government, has such a mandate would seem to obviate the need for his reappointment as humanitarian coordinator.

Furthermore, we deem it essential that in the few instances where a special humanitarian coordinator is required he should necessarily be designated resident coordinator, in line with the approved procedures, in

order to ensure that there is no lack of continuity in the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development.

Finally, we understand that it is necessary to outline clearly the relationship between the resident coordinator and the humanitarian coordinator when he is one of the agency representatives, as well as his relationship with the proposed zone-area coordinators.

With regard to the possible enlargement of the CERF, we are convinced that this is a necessary measure, particularly in the light of the unsuccessful attempts to accelerate the reimbursement to the Fund. This had been identified in resolution 48/57 as an alternative to the enlargement, but it is now evident that such an alternative is not feasible. In this respect, the Government of Brazil is ready to consider participating, within its possibilities, in a concerted effort by the membership to increase the funds available to the CERF.

The delegation of Argentina has brought a timely and relevant initiative before the General Assembly — the constitution of national volunteer corps that could be called upon by the United Nations in the context of humanitarian emergencies: the “white helmets” initiative.

The delegation of Brazil welcomes the constructive informal consultations promoted by the Argentine delegation with a number of interested parties. The draft resolution benefited from a wide range of comments and suggestions made in these consultations, and the result is a well-balanced text, which provides clear guidelines as to the modalities of participation by volunteers in the response of the United Nations system to humanitarian emergencies. My delegation is therefore pleased to join the sponsors of the draft resolution.

Finally, I should like to take this opportunity to convey to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen, and to the dedicated staff of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and of the agencies involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance the appreciation of the delegation of Brazil for their selfless commitment, frequently at great personal risk, to the increasing tide of victims of natural disasters and other emergencies — a tide that threatens to engulf even the best efforts of the international community if we do not act promptly to address the root causes of these emergencies: lack of development.

Mr. Catarino (Portugal): The Portuguese delegation fully supports the statement made by the representative of

Germany on behalf of the European Union concerning the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

I should like, however, to address the sub-item related to assistance to Mozambique. In this context, I reaffirm that the Government of Portugal welcomes the successful conclusion of the recent elections in Mozambique. I congratulate the Mozambican people on the highly civilized manner in which the electoral process was conducted and wish to convey our appreciation to the Government of Mozambique and all the other parties involved in the electoral process.

We sincerely hope that a new page has been turned in the history of this brotherly country and that the Mozambican people will use all their human and natural resources for the construction of a new society in which the well-being and rights of the citizens are fulfilled. In their efforts, they should be able to rely on the support of the international community. I am pleased to note that under agenda item 37, “Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance”, a sub-item relating specifically to assistance to Mozambique has been included.

The report contained in document A/49/387 gives an overall view of the different programmes carried out by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in the light of emergency requirements for the period 1992-94: food aid, basic health services and nutrition, water supply and sanitation, agriculture, the repatriation of refugees and the transportation of internally displaced people. Special attention should, however, be given to programmes in the areas of the reintegration of civilians and demobilized soldiers, road reconstruction and mine clearance. In this context, I commend the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Peter Hansen, for his active role and his dedication in these fields.

Adding to the human suffering in Mozambique, heavy damage was caused by cyclone Nadia, which recently devastated the country — mainly its northern provinces. Portugal, having followed with concern this natural disaster, which seriously affected the housing and crops of the Mozambican people, provided relief aid.

My Government strongly supports the efforts made by the Government of Mozambique, in cooperation with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and other

relevant organizations of the United Nations system, to ensure the implementation of development projects, especially with regard to poverty alleviation, the strengthening of institutional and human capacities, and all programmes to pave the way to national reconstruction and the country's economic rehabilitation.

We believe that it is of the utmost importance that the United Nations system continue to mobilize the financial, technical and material resources required by the new Government in order to help the people of Mozambique to achieve a better life for future generations. In addition, the international community should continue to contribute actively to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Mozambique with a view to enabling the country to build a prosperous and stable economy.

Portugal is doing its utmost for the people of Mozambique in various areas of relief assistance — health, education, training and humanitarian matters. In this regard, in 1993 my Government provided Mozambique with assistance amounting to \$22 million.

Ms. Coelho da Cruz (Angola) (*interpretation from French*): I should like first to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report and to Mr. Peter Hansen, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for his statement and the information he has given us.

My delegation also associates itself with the statement of the representative of the Group of 77.

Despite the continuing difficulties over the provision of emergency relief, we note that some progress has been made. The establishment, in March 1994, of the International Emergency Readiness and Response Information System and the creation of the post of Emergency Relief Coordinator are important steps towards achieving effective action by the United Nations in this area.

On the other hand, shortage of financial resources is likely to hamper the implementation of humanitarian programmes. The state of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, which was established by General Assembly resolution 46/182 as a financing mechanism, continues to give rise to concern. Urgent action must be taken to increase its financial base through an appeal to donor countries for additional contributions.

We also encourage the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to undertake a study of new strategies for the mobilization of resources.

Natural disasters and domestic conflict are increasing throughout the world, entailing considerable losses in human life and material damage. The signing of the Lusaka protocol on 20 November 1994 is opening up a new era in the history of my country, and will allow 3 million displaced persons to return to their homes and to resume their normal lives. However, for this operation to be crowned with success, my Government requires massive support from the international community and from all international and non-governmental organizations.

My delegation thanks all the organizations and Governments that have stood side by side with us in these most difficult times, and we launch an urgent appeal for an increase in aid at this critical juncture.

The World Conference on Natural Disasters, held last May in Yokohama, provided information for Governments concerning the dangers posed by natural disasters and the need to undertake global collective action. My delegation fully supports the Plan of Action adopted at the Conference.

Regarding the question of land mines, taking into account the fact that the de-mining process is part of the efforts to maintain and consolidate peace, my delegation wishes to reiterate that the development of the de-mining programmes being carried out in Afghanistan and Cambodia must be extended to the Republic of Angola.

The President (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988, I now call on the Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Shreim (Palestine) The signing of the Declaration of Principles between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, on 13 September 1993 in Washington, D.C., was a turning-point in the Arab-Israeli conflict, opening the door wide for political conciliation based on justice and for the achievement of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. This peace, however, can be strengthened and secured only when the people of the region begin to feel tangibly that their daily lives have changed for the better.

Among the most difficult circumstances now being faced by the Palestinian Authority is the lack of resources at both the human level and the financial level — resources that would enable it to reverse the damage that has been inflicted upon the Palestinian economy and Palestinian society during more than a quarter century of occupation. The long and harsh years of occupation have left us with a ruined and inadequate infrastructure, with substantial portions of our land having been confiscated for the purposes of building illegal settlements, and we have had our water and natural resources expropriated.

The Palestinian Authority, upon its establishment, has undertaken the task of steering forward the direction of a society and an economy which, as a result of the prolonged and oppressive occupation from which they are emerging, do not enjoy a normal state of being and functioning. The policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, have led to the marginalization of the Palestinian economy, constrained its growth and forced it into extreme dependency on the Israeli economy. That is the situation the Palestinian Authority has inherited from Israel, the occupying Power, and it has had to begin with the very basics in the building of new structures and institutions for its new infrastructure, in addition to formulating policies and programmes for implementation. It is a great task and the challenges are numerous; after so many years of suffering and sacrifice, the expectations of the Palestinian people for a better future are high.

It has been 14 months since the signing of the Declaration of Principles, and six months since the Israeli withdrawal, which took place in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area, and the subsequent establishment of the Palestinian Authority in those areas, but the Palestinian people have yet to experience the dividends of peace. They supported the peace process, even with all its shortcomings, in the hope that this would be a first step towards the fulfilment of their inalienable rights, including the right to have their own independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital. At the same time, it was their understanding that the international community would assist them in this endeavour, as well as provide them with the chance to launch their own development plan and rebuild their society.

Unfortunately, many of the promises and pledges that have been made have yet to be fulfilled, and the Palestinian people have yet to reap the fruits of peace. As is the case all over the world, the fact remains that the cost of supporting and nurturing peace will certainly be much less than the cost of long and difficult conflicts. In our area, the

Middle East, the cost of supporting peace is marginal compared to the costly era of conflict. In addition, supporting the Palestinian people at this critical stage will redress the injustices which have been inflicted upon them for almost 50 years, including the long years of occupation. Let me stress that it is very unrealistic to expect peace to prevail in the Middle East without solving the core of its conflict, the question of Palestine, in all its aspects, including the final status issues, to the satisfaction of the Palestinian people.

Immediately after the signing of the Declaration of Principles, the Conference to Support Middle East Peace was held on 1 October 1993 in Washington, D.C. At that Conference, \$2.4 billion was pledged for the five years of 1994 to 1998, of which \$720 million were allocated for 1994, and the task of coordinating the international aid effort through the agreed mechanisms and modalities was given to the World Bank. At this time, although we appreciate the efforts that have been made thus far by the donor community to help the Palestinian Authority, we cannot ignore the fact that little has been achieved with regard to the delivery of pledges. Moreover, we believe that continual delays in delivering the pledged assistance harms the peace process and increases the risk of failure.

We have before us a situation which is obviously unique and quite complex. In light of the circumstances, the Palestinian side is not and should not be expected to be completely ready, and we believe that the parties concerned should be more responsive to the urgent need for the rapid delivery of the assistance, without necessarily insisting, at least at the very beginning, on very strict, impractical conditions that have so far resulted in the delivery of less than 25 per cent of the money pledged for 1994. We are determined to increase our efforts and to do our part of the job, and we hope that soon we will witness different responses and different results.

We believe that the United Nations has an important role to play in this regard. Here we would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts to increase the contribution of the United Nations and its agencies, including his decision to appoint a Special Coordinator in the occupied territories, which has highlighted the important role the United Nations can play in the transitional period ahead by providing the Palestinian people with greatly needed and coordinated assistance. We do appreciate the very important contributions of the agencies of the United Nations, in particular the important work done by the United Nations

Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

We also believe that the full and speedy implementation of the Declaration of Principles is imperative in order to give the Palestinian people more control in their daily lives and more control of the basic tools for economic development, such as land, water and other resources. This is also important for maintaining the confidence of the Palestinian people in the peace process and for achieving the necessary stability for investment, especially by the private sector. Furthermore, Israel should begin thinking in terms of the new situation and should terminate its detrimental policies and practices against the Palestinian people, including the dangerous policy of unilaterally closing Palestinian territory, which amounts to a collective punishment of the Palestinian people. It is noteworthy that this closing is not geographically based. It is directed against the Palestinian people, while the illegal Israeli settlers maintain their free movement.

The Palestinian Authority has many important tasks on its agenda that it must fulfil. The overall expansion and improvement of the economic and social infrastructure, which is in a state of collapse, is one of its most urgent and critical tasks. In this regard, the creation of employment opportunities in particular is among its basic priorities. This is a very serious and pressing objective in view of the very high level of unemployment, which exceeds 50 per cent in Gaza alone. Furthermore, the Palestinian Authority is determined to build a democratic society based on political plurality, modern institutions and adherence to market-economy policies. We have begun this difficult job and we are determined to finish it, overriding all obstacles, because this is the only means by which the Palestinian people can live in dignity and in freedom.

At this time, I should like officially to reiterate our deep thanks and appreciation to every donor country, specialized agency and non-governmental organization that has contributed to assisting of the Palestinian people during this critical juncture of our history, regardless of the size or timing of such contributions.

A draft resolution will be presented on assistance to the Palestinian people. Its text will be almost identical to the one adopted by consensus by the Economic and Social Council and to the resolution on this subject adopted by the General Assembly at its last session. We hope that it will be adopted by consensus at this session of the Assembly.

Let me take this opportunity also to express our support for the draft resolution presented by Norway on the financing of the police force, and also to express the hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The President (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with the decision taken at the 58th plenary meeting, held on 17 November 1994, I now call on the Observer of Switzerland.

Mr. Manz (Switzerland) (*interpretation from French*): The experience of the past few years shows that the number and magnitude of emergency situations confronting the international community is continuing to grow. As a result, the search for solutions is becoming ever more difficult and must take into account a plethora of factors.

On the general level, Switzerland stresses that the credibility of any humanitarian commitment is closely linked to respect for two fundamental principles: neutrality and impartiality. The distinction between political action by the international community, whose ultimate goal is the re-establishment of peace, and humanitarian action must be preserved so that the independence and effectiveness of the latter can be ensured for the victims of conflicts, who have a recognized right to assistance.

On a more concrete level, the primary challenge in emergency situations remains coordination between the various players involved. Switzerland is closely following the efforts undertaken by the United Nations system to make improvements along these lines and is ready to support them. In this context, my Government welcomes the fact that the Inter-agency Standing Committee is increasingly playing its role as an instrument for priority coordination under the aegis of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in conformity with resolution 46/182.

With regard to coordination in the field, Switzerland is satisfied with the solution adopted — namely, to appoint humanitarian coordinators. The fact that we are basing ourselves primarily on a system of resident coordinators, as was envisaged in the initial resolution, has, to our view, several advantages, the most important being the necessary link between the emergency stage and the beginning of reconstruction.

My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the commitment of all entities in the humanitarian field, both within and outside the United Nations system, and in particular to the dedication of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of a large number of non-governmental organizations. These organizations will no doubt remain essential partners of the United Nations humanitarian agencies.

The immediate commitment of the necessary financial means is a *sine qua non* for any effective action in emergency situations. Since its establishment, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund has proved its usefulness in this field. As for the way it functions, we believe that the commendable effort of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs at transparency has helped clarify certain vague points and therefore should be pursued. We are confident that appropriate solutions can be found in other areas as well, such as speeding up reimbursements by the agencies, taking into account situations forgotten by the media and the international community, and ensuring that the Fund's resources will be devoted primarily to the initial stage of an emergency situation. Switzerland is in favour of additional improvements, in particular with respect to the functioning of the Fund as such and the strengthening of the complementarity between the Fund and the agencies' special funds. On the other hand, Switzerland is divided concerning the request of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for an increase of the Fund's capital. In any case, increasing the Fund's resources cannot in itself solve all the existing problems.

Switzerland has taken note with interest of the Argentine initiative for the establishment of a network of "white helmets" and welcomes this idea. The establishment in various countries of such a network of volunteers seems to us wise and useful. We will need to define the form in which the "white helmets" could best be associated with the efforts of the United Nations.

The international community is still confronted with the scourge of mines. It is no exaggeration to assert that the proliferation of more than 110 million land-mines is one of the most barbaric ordeals that the human race has inflicted on itself over the last few decades. To fight this scourge, Switzerland attaches great importance to universal recognition of the 1980 Convention on restrictions on the use of certain inhumane weapons, and in particular to its Protocol II. Switzerland feels that strengthening the Protocol is of fundamental significance. That is why my Government has decided to apply a moratorium on the sale of land-mines to States that have not ratified it.

A special effort must be made in the field to step up de-mining activities, as well as programmes of consciousness-raising and of medical assistance for victims. Switzerland welcomes the important work carried out by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in this area but also wishes to emphasize the urgency of providing to the United Nations de-mining programmes with the means to meet the challenges facing them. Therefore, Switzerland will increase its contributions to United Nations de-mining programmes and related activities.

The importance of respect for human rights and international humanitarian law in conflict situations is indisputable. My delegation would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the conference of experts that the Swiss Government will be organizing next January in Geneva on the protection of victims of war. That conference will strive to identify practical means of promoting respect for and implementation of the rules of international humanitarian law. Switzerland hopes that the work of the conference will be crowned with success with the adoption of measures making it possible to improve in concrete ways the plight of the victims of armed conflict.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker on agenda item 37 and its sub-items (a), (b), (c), (d), (f) and (g).

I wish to inform members that the Assembly will take decisions on the draft resolutions under agenda item 37 and its sub-items at a later date to be announced in the *Journal*.

In this regard, I wish to remind representatives once again that the first meeting of the coordinator of informal consultations on this agenda item will be held today at 3 p.m. in Conference Room 8.

In addition, I wish to inform members that the Assembly will consider sub-item (e), entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan" at a later date to be announced in the *Journal*.

Agenda item 16 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(c) Election of seventeen members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

The President (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly will now turn to the election of seventeen members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law to replace those members whose term of office expires on 1 May 1995.

The seventeen outgoing members are Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Togo and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Those members are eligible for immediate re-election.

I should like to remind members that, as of 2 May 1995, the following States will continue to be represented on the Commission: Argentina, Austria, Chile, Ecuador, Hungary, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Kenya, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Spain, Sudan, Thailand, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America and Uruguay. Therefore, those 19 States are not eligible.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election will be held by secret ballot and there will be no nominations.

However, I wish to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I shall now read out the names of the candidates endorsed by the regional groups.

For the five seats allocated to the African States, they are Algeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Egypt and Nigeria.

For the three seats allocated to the Asian States, they are China, Japan and Singapore.

For the two seats allocated to the Latin American and Caribbean States, they are Brazil and Mexico.

For the five seats allocated to the Western European and other States, they are Australia, Finland, France, Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Since the number of candidates endorsed by the African States, the Asian States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States corresponds to the number of seats to be allocated to each region, I declare those candidates elected for a six-year term beginning on 2 May 1995.

With regard to the two seats from among the Eastern European States, I call on the representative of Georgia, as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Chkheidze (Georgia): In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States for the month of November, I have the honour to inform members of the General Assembly that there are three candidates from the Eastern European Group for two seats in the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law: Bulgaria, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

The President (*interpretation from French*): For the Eastern European States, the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies allocated to that region. Therefore, the Assembly will now proceed to a vote by secret ballot to elect two members from the Eastern European States.

I should like to inform the Assembly that the number of candidates not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, receiving the greatest number of votes and not less than the majority required, will be declared elected. In the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a restricted ballot limited to those candidates which have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): Ballot papers marked "C" will now be distributed.

I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the two States from among the Eastern European States for which they wish to vote.

A ballot paper containing more than two names will be declared invalid. Names on a ballot paper of Member States which are outside the region shall not be counted at all.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Fanucchi (Argentina), Mr. van de Craen (Belgium) and Mr. Bahaiham (Saudi Arabia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11.25 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.

The President (*interpretation from French*): The result of the voting is as follows:

Number of ballot paper:	148
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	148
Abstentions:	2
Number of Members voting:	146
Required majority:	74
Number of votes obtained:	
Russian Federation	109
Bulgaria	94
Ukraine	84

Bulgaria and the Russian Federation, having obtained the required majority, were elected members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law for a six-year term beginning on 2 May 1995.

The President (*interpretation from French*): The following 17 States are therefore elected members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law for a six-year term beginning on 2 May 1995: Algeria, Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Singapore and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I congratulate the States which have been elected members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

This concludes our consideration of agenda item 16 (c).

Agenda item 34

The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/689)

Draft resolution (A/49/L.40)

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.40.

Mr. Guillen (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly for its consideration a draft resolution entitled "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti", contained in document A/49/L.40. I do so in my capacity as Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Group of States, which is a sponsor of the draft resolution. We hope that it will be adopted without a vote. We wish to thank most sincerely those countries that have now offered to join in sponsoring it.

The draft resolution before the Assembly this morning is the first to reaffirm support for Haiti following the return of President Aristide to his country through the efforts of the United Nations. In the preambular part of the draft resolution the Assembly would stress the need for the international community to continue its support for technical, economic and financial cooperation with Haiti. It would welcome the return of President Aristide to his country and take note of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/49/689 of 23 November 1994, in particular his recommendations with regard to the mandate of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti.

In its operative part the draft resolution expresses appreciation to all States which have accompanied the Haitian people in their efforts to return to a constitutional order and democracy; welcomes the appointment of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General; and commends the cooperation between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. It also requests the immediate return to Haiti of all members of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti and urges the international community and governmental and non-governmental organizations to increase their technical, economic and financial

cooperation with Haiti in support of its economic and social development efforts and in order to strengthen Haitian democratic institutions.

Lastly, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue supporting the efforts of the Government of Haiti for national reconstruction and the establishment of a lasting democracy and full respect for human rights. It also requests him to ensure the coordination of the efforts of the United Nations system towards an appropriate response to Haiti's humanitarian aid needs and development requirements.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed in half an hour.

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I therefore request representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible.

Mrs. Werleigh (Haiti) (*interpretation from French*): After three long years of military dictatorship, marked by bloody repression that claimed more than 7,000 victims among the Haitian population in the cities and the countryside, democratic life resumed in Haiti on 15 October 1994 with the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. That event, whose significance and unique nature galvanized the media of the entire world, represents both a victory and a challenge. It is the victory of all genuine democrats, who joined forces to stop impostors and usurpers; the victory of all justice-loving and freedom-loving Governments, which always supported the legitimate Government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide; the victory of organizations governing international democratic life, which firmly and totally rejected the whims of those who master-minded the *coup d'état*; and the victory of the Haitian people, who never succumbed to the putschists, despite all the atrocities to which they were subjected.

In this connection, on behalf of the people and Government of Haiti, I should like to pay tribute to the farsightedness and determination of the General Assembly, which, from the earliest days of the *coup d'état* of 30 September 1991, managed to find effective institutional machinery to make the restoration of democracy and the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Haiti inevitable.

Indeed, resolution 46/7 of 11 October 1991, in which the General Assembly declared unacceptable any entity resulting from the *coup d'état* and demanded the restoration of the legitimate Government of President Aristide, put a brake on the claims of those who had usurped power. To be sure, they made efforts to move forward, and each time they came up against the same obstacles: total rejection and treatment as pariahs.

The issue was included on the agenda of the General Assembly each year so that progress could be assessed. Each year the item came before the Assembly again, the same in letter and in spirit, and treated with the same firmness and with the same goals: the restoration of democracy and the return of the elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Allow me to thank all members of the Assembly and to express our gratitude for their intense interest. I say to them "Your attitude, along with the firm will of the Haitian people and its friends, has yielded the hoped for results — the restoration of the democratic process in Haiti."

Since 15 October 1994 a new ray of hope, brightened by solidarity, has appeared on the country's horizon. The longed for and hoped for peace is within reach. Yet to move from the present situation to the one we would like to see entails genuine challenges which we, as the Government in power, must meet.

The first challenge is political. The *coup d'état* had the effect of polarizing Haitian society. It is now up to us to put the broken pieces back together by giving the highest priority to collective well-being. That is why we seek reconciliation and peace.

All our actions have been planned to that end. The formation of the new Government bears witness to this. The various tendencies in the democratic sector are represented in it. Our purpose is also attested to by the broad consultations undertaken to establish an Electoral Council entrusted with carrying out the forthcoming legislative and municipal elections.

In the meantime, public freedoms have been fully restored. In keeping with the provisions of the Constitution, the Government has decreed the abolition of the Corps of Section Chiefs, the backbone of repression in the interior.

Next there is the social challenge. Over the past two centuries Haitian society has created flagrant social inequalities that persist today and that are repugnant to the human conscience. An infinitesimally small minority of privileged people control over 85 per cent of the country's wealth, while the majority of the population is clearly living below the poverty threshold and growing poorer day by day. We must set up the basic structures to ensure, very quickly, that the basic needs of all are satisfied, and we must gradually rectify the clear, universally recognized inequities.

We also face an environmental challenge. The country is at the brink of an abyss, its vegetation cover reduced to less than 3 per cent. Hurricane Gordon recently revealed the fragility of our natural environment. An appeal has been made to all men and women of goodwill to halt ecological deterioration. With each torrential rain or tropical hurricane, more arable land is washed into the sea. When arable land goes elsewhere, it is only natural that men should also leave. Let us keep hold of and replenish our land and reforest our country, and we shall then see its sons and daughters return to live in it. That is the profound significance of the huge national reforestation campaign to be undertaken by the Government.

With regard to the question of economic challenge, the *coup d'état* of 30 September 1991 had a considerable effect on the already-shaky economy of Haiti. Smuggling became a national matter; prices climbed day by day; the national currency was being devalued before our eyes, and banknotes were issued according to the whim of the de facto authorities; unemployment is in full swing; and the accumulation of wealth by illegal means is becoming the norm.

Today we are involved in getting the Haitian economy back on its feet by restoring the confidence of all — workers, trade unions, national and international investors and international financial institutions — by promoting labour-intensive employment, aiming for the provision of training at all levels and developing the spirit of enterprise.

I should like to refer to the progress that has been made since the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on 15 October 1994. The President's return took place under the banner of peace, reconciliation and reconstruction. In all these areas, important landmarks have already been established. These demonstrate beyond any question the Government's unshakeable will to establish a state of law in Haiti. Peace on the streets and in people's

hearts, is returning to what it was during the first seven months of the exercise of power in 1991. Night life is resuming.

However, there is still a long way to go. There are still pockets of resistance, in places where there is a significant stockpile of deadly weapons. Complete disarmament must be achieved as quickly as possible. The dismantling of stockpiles of weapons will restore the security that is indispensable to collective well-being and to the development of business, so important from the point of view of the impending elections. It is time for weapons to fall silent for ever so that those men and women who have so much to say about the future of Haiti may speak. We call upon the international community in general and, in particular, on the members of the Multinational Force, which are taking part in the process of restoring democracy in Haiti, to make this an absolute priority.

Clearly, large-scale initiatives have been undertaken — notably, the restructuring of the Haitian armed forces; progress, at the legislative level, on the adoption of the law that separates the police from the army; the gradual establishment of the new police force; the dissolution of the corps of heads of section; and the seizing of certain stockpiles of arms.

The Haitian Government is working day and night to restore the judicial system so that every man and woman may be guaranteed access to genuine justice. To this end, we need to reconstruct our courts of justice and undertake the training or retraining of our judges. Our legislation must be updated to reflect the new realities and to correct the intrinsic, age-old flaws in the existing system.

Following the three years of the *coup d'état*, the Haitian people have legitimate claims, especially in the area of justice. We have a duty to meet such claims. In this context, the Haitian Government intends, with the cooperation of international bodies dedicated to the defence and advancement of human rights, to establish a truth commission, whose mandate will be to investigate violations of human rights during the past three years. If reconciliation is to be cemented and made effective, justice must be rendered to those to whom it is due.

In this area, we intend to take advantage of the experience acquired by certain countries in the region that have had to initiate a similar process to extricate themselves, without violence or vengeance, from deep

crises that have torn their societies apart. This is the price of peace; this is the price of reconstructing the country; this is the price of the country's future. Democracy will be strengthened as a result.

We realize that, in terms of strengthening democracy and the state of law in Haiti, we must take significant action to begin real and genuine development in the country. This is the time for action. The Haitian population, which suffered terribly during the period of the *coup*, is waiting impatiently for concrete manifestations of the economic recovery that will enable it to satisfy its fundamental needs; build a better future for itself — for the family, the community and the country; increase the resources at its disposal; take in hand its destiny as a people; change, once and for all, the image of the country in terms of its various elements; and transform Haitian society.

We intend to undertake a significant and definitive change of course that will leave its mark in the annals of history. Clearly, we cannot do this alone. We need the international community and bodies such as the United Nations to support us by accompanying us as they have done during the past three years.

We cannot conclude without touching on a subject that is of the greatest importance to us — the question of refugees. Never before in our history as a people have we witnessed such a vast exodus of our compatriots. More than 100,000 people have left the country. Fleeing the repression initiated by the military dictatorship, they preferred taking the risk of death at sea to remaining in the country, which, as members of this Assembly know, had become a living hell. The countries accepting the greatest numbers of refugees were the United States, the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas.

However, since President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's return to power no case of exodus has been noted, and we should like to declare that during the first seven months, in 1991, of the Government of President Aristide we did not witness any such phenomenon — in fact, quite the opposite. We intend to see to it that the country's migratory flow is again reversed.

If political stability can guarantee that our compatriots will not leave, it will also mean the return of those who were forced to leave. If the process is not rigorously controlled, a mass return of refugees could become a source of instability for the Government. Following the three terrible years that we have experienced, that is

something that we do not need. Thus, return, whether undertaken voluntarily or imposed by the Governments of those countries in which our compatriots are living, must be planned and carried out in accordance with the rules.

The Government of Haiti, aware of this problem and concerned that it should be resolved, has already drawn up a repatriation plan, which includes provision for a monthly quota of gradually returning refugees, with variations from region to region according to the facilities available. This plan will have to be discussed with the countries involved as soon as possible, as some of these have already expressed to us their wish to proceed with repatriation.

This plan proposes to the Governments involved a timetable for repatriation. It also includes a programme for the reintegration of these compatriots in their original homes. This will require the creation of jobs, credit for production, the construction of housing, subsidies for the school enrolment of children, medical assistance and so on.

The implementation of such a plan will be based on the real capacity of the Government in terms of its economic and financial possibilities on the one hand and on the degree of openness and understanding of our partners on the other.

The devastated and ravaged economy that we have inherited after these three years of military rule do not allow us to guarantee the implementation of the plan without firm support from the international community. In this context, the release of the funds promised by friendly countries is an imperative need.

The reintegration of refugees in Haiti is a large-scale project that affects health, education, agriculture, training and many other areas. We intend to manage it effectively and diligently, and we are counting on the solidarity of all those countries that share with us the objective of the restoration of democracy and the establishment of a state of law in Haiti.

Mr. Martinez Blanco (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, I should like to reiterate to you, on behalf of the Central American States of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Honduras, how pleased we are to see you presiding over the proceedings of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, as well as our commitment to work with you in your delicate tasks.

The Central American States I have the honour to represent join with the international community and the people of Haiti to hail the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the restoration of institutional and democratic order. That is why we give our full support to the draft resolution introduced by the Permanent Representative of Peru in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The peaceful deployment of the multinational force in Haiti, under the aegis of the United Nations and in accordance with Security Council 940 (1994) of 31 July 1994, created the necessary conditions for the return of President Aristide to Haitian territory. The multinational forces established the climate of confidence necessary for the people of Haiti to

"begin to rebuild their country with dignity and consolidate democracy in a spirit of national reconciliation",

as stipulated in paragraph 1 of resolution 948 (1994), adopted by the Security Council at its meeting of 15 October last.

Similarly, Central America notes with satisfaction the considerable progress made in restoring democracy in Haiti. The reopening of the parliament; the adoption in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of an amnesty bill for those who seized power by a coup d'état in 1991; the reinstatement of the legitimate Mayor of Port-au-Prince; the restoration of communications and information systems to legitimate use; and the reopening of the airport to international flights — all are positive events that significantly contribute to the return of normality in Haiti.

Central America appreciates and, indeed, pays a special tribute to the personnel of States participating in the multinational forces. Their work in controlling arms on Haitian territory, the increase in the number of international police monitors, the establishment of a provisional public safety force and the work to organize the Haitian armed forces as an apolitical, non-partisan entity under the authority of the executive branch — all are key factors in the creation of a safe and stable environment guaranteeing the transfer of power to the legitimately elected leaders and the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and the provisions of the Governors Island Agreements.

The Central American countries supported the peaceful settlement of the conflict from the beginning; they

also supported the imposition of sanctions by the United Nations against the de facto authorities. In their Declaration on Haiti of 23 July 1994, the Presidents of the Central American countries, convinced that active solidarity in the region was necessary in view of the breakdown of constitutional order and the violation of human rights in Haiti, reaffirmed the Declaration of Panama in support of the restoration of democratic institutions in that country, as well as the Agenda of Guatemala, in which we reiterate our full support for the resolutions adopted by the Security Council as well as by the ad hoc Meeting on Haiti of the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of American States (OAS).

Similarly, at that time, heeding the appeal addressed by the United Nations to the international community to increase humanitarian assistance to the Haitian people, the Central American Presidents stated that they intended to provide temporary asylum for Haitian refugees.

Similarly, Central America acknowledges that the return of President Aristide to his country would not have been possible without close cooperation between this world body and the inter-American regional organization, the OAS, in particular, the joint operations of the OAS/United Nations International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH). In this connection, we wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report to the General Assembly in document A/49/689 dated 23 November 1994 on recent activities carried out by that Mission with a view to monitoring the human rights situation in Haiti and restoring and strengthening its democratic institutions.

The return of President Aristide to power is simply the first step in a long journey towards ensuring an honest Government and a decent life for the Haitian people. Restoring President Aristide to power is one thing; bringing prosperity to Haiti is another. The social and economic crisis in all its dimensions still persist in this fraternal country: low per capita income, short life expectancy, the highest mortality rates in the hemisphere, malnutrition, disease, deforestation and the erosion of arable land.

Over the past three years, this sombre picture had become even darker. The *coup d'état* of September 1991 had certainly been a setback for the emerging Haitian democratic system. However, the de facto authorities' refusal to comply with the provisions of the Governors Island Agreement had resulted in the imposition by the United Nations of new economic sanctions, making life

even harder for the long-suffering Haitian people. The military dictatorship's repression of the people and the impact of the embargo undermined the already weak socio-economic structure of Haiti.

Central America calls upon the international community and the countries of the hemisphere that helped safeguard democracy in Haiti to replace military cooperation by economic cooperation and thereby provide Haiti with massive international assistance. For there can be no peace or democracy without development, and the rebuilding of Haiti largely will depend upon international support.

The Central American States believe that, unless Haiti's severe socio-economic and ecological problems are effectively solved by the firm determination of its people and Government and by international assistance, its already precarious situation will dramatically worsen.

The States that founded the United Nations clearly set out in the Charter the principle of collective security. In recent years this principle seems to have evolved towards the idea of comprehensive security — that is, security that is multidimensional and requires that attention be paid not only to political and diplomatic disputes but also to factors such as economic underdevelopment and situations involving, for instance, human rights violations.

The many references in the Charter of the United Nations to international peace and security must be taken literally, and in particular the reference in Article 99, which enables the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Security Council

"any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security".

The concept that security is as applicable to the protection of individuals as it is to the defence of the territorial integrity of States must be further developed. Strengthening human security means protection of fundamental human rights by the international community, bearing in mind that the most essential right of all — the right to life — is frequently and grossly violated in internal conflicts.

Faith in fundamental rights is addressed in the preamble to the Charter, and the specific responsibility of the Organization and its Members to promote and observe human rights is set out in Articles 55 and 56. The General Assembly is given a broad mandate in Article 10 to discuss

and make recommendations on this matter. Nothing in Chapters V, VI or VII of the Charter explicitly excludes human rights from the broad concept of security.

Peace-building is a long-term preventive strategy that addresses the potential causes of insecurity — a strategy aimed at well-balanced economic development, the promotion of human rights as broadly defined, and the preparation of the ground for good governance.

We Central Americans believe that these goals should be achieved by all States, not only for their own good but because progress towards the achievement of the goals contributes greatly to national and international security. Policies that secure economic development and justice, promote the rule of law, protect individual rights and encourage the establishment of democratic institutions are also policies of security.

Mr. Ardhaoui (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I shall conclude this statement by quoting from the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled, "An Agenda for Peace":

"a conviction has grown, among nations large and small, that an opportunity has been regained to achieve the great objectives of the Charter — a United Nations capable of maintaining international peace and security, of securing justice and human rights and of promoting, in the words of the Charter, 'social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom'". (A/47/277, para. 3)

Mr. Aljure (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I take this opportunity to express again my Government's condolences on the great human and material losses suffered by Haiti and other countries of the region as a result of Hurricane "Gordon". Furthermore, Colombia shares the Haitian nation's joy as it once again takes the road of democracy and peace after years of oppression and suffering.

Restoring respect for the constitution and the law, restoring legitimate authority and, above all, restoring the Haitian people's right freely to choose its destiny are extraordinary achievements. While some reservations have been expressed on various aspects of the intervention and what was done finally to achieve it, there is widespread rejoicing that democracy has returned to Haiti. In addition, the return to power of the legitimate

authorities took place without bloodshed, to the satisfaction of the broad majority of the Haitian people.

We must not, however, forget that these important achievements followed a lengthy stage of social and economic debilitation that had been superimposed, like heavy baggage, on the oblivion to which that fraternal country had been relegated for more than a century. It is clear that the major responsibility for this institutional regression and the increasingly acute crisis must be borne by those who usurped power, flouted rights and freedom and sowed terror and violence. But it must be recognized that the very act of intervention, supported as it was by the broad majority of States and carried out in principle in agreement with the legitimate authorities, has placed upon the United Nations moral and political responsibilities to the Haitian nation. This is not merely a question of the solidarity aroused when a Member State finds itself in critical circumstances; rather, it is the logical response that the Organization must make to a situation that, to some degree, it caused and that could determine that nation's fate for years to come. In addition, some specific aspects of the crisis in Haiti, such as the deterioration of the physical infrastructure and the dismantling of the productive apparatus, are at least in part a result of the harsh and prolonged trade embargo imposed on that country by mandate of the United Nations itself.

Our agenda calls for the restoration of democracy and full respect for human rights in Haiti. As is made clear in the very detailed report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, in document A/49/513, in the first few months of 1994 respect for human rights had severely deteriorated and there was no longer even a vestige of democratic life. It is obvious that with the restoration of legitimate authority the picture changed radically. The most serious violations of human rights and civil guarantees have now disappeared, and the foundation for the restoration of democratic life has been laid.

None the less, the situation is extremely fragile. The very fact that the positive changes have taken place through military action raises questions about the future. The dismantling of the repressive apparatus of security forces and paramilitary groups has created conditions that are necessary but insufficient to guarantee full respect for human rights. In fact, those very purges suggest the need for other, special actions in this sphere, relating to the guarantees that must be provided for all Haitians without exception, in view of the still precarious situation of the Haitian judicial system.

Concerted efforts are needed in many other spheres in order to make headway in securing human rights and consolidating the democratic process. For example, the achievement of these goals depends on the parallel achievement of high rates of economic development in conditions of social justice and equity, so that the age-old deficiencies in the generation and distribution of wealth in Haiti can be properly attacked and so that conditions for productive employment and a propitious climate for social integration can be created.

Our delegation fully agrees with the many statements of the United Nations and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States on the indivisibility of human rights, particularly the recent statement by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in his report to the General Assembly in document A/49/36. While this does not mean that the grave abuses of human rights committed during the years of dictatorship should be condoned, in the case of Haiti it must be acknowledged that the enjoyment of civil and political rights and the attainment of minimal social, economic and cultural rights are interrelated. The collective attainment of the right to development is particularly relevant, for it is the foundation for building a solid Haitian democracy and it helps in the establishment of a climate conducive to the exercise of all human rights.

In this context, the development strategies that the legitimate authorities and the people of Haiti autonomously choose must be supported by the United Nations — particularly its human rights bodies — as well as other international organizations and the multilateral development bank. This is also an area where various bilateral or regional associations to ensure mutual cooperation should be established, in conditions that are not burdensome for Haiti and that preserve its sovereignty and its capacity for self-determination.

The restitution of public power and the proper functioning of its instruments — especially those of judicial power, civil security and local administrations — are some other elements that are fundamental to the creation of appropriate conditions for respect for human rights and the securing of democracy. The Haitian people and its authorities will have to take autonomous decisions on those elements, decisions that should not discourage the assistance of friendly countries or even the United Nations.

The key component of this whole process is the preservation of the decision-making capacity of the

Haitian people and the authorities set up in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the country. To that end all kinds of intervention must be terminated as soon as possible. In order to achieve that, we must implement the programme envisaging the replacement of the multinational force by the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). The International Civilian Mission (MICIVIH), of which the Organization of American States (OAS) forms part, should be involved in the transition process. All of this must be done on condition that the Haitian authorities and people want it done.

We have taken careful note of the interesting suggestions that can be found in the reports of the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur regarding the immediate steps that must be taken to ensure that progress made by Haiti in spheres addressed by this agenda take on their own momentum.

But we also think that the recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Mission for Haiti of the United Nations and the Organization of American States would be a good point of departure for guiding international cooperation for the development of Haiti, which is so relevant to the situation of democracy and human rights in that country. That Mission was headed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and representatives of the then-in-exile legitimate Government and various international agencies took an active part in it. Its recommendations are contained in an October 1993 document entitled "Emergency economic recovery programme". An updated version of that document will be distributed soon, but the version available is still current in many respects.

It is agreed that our collaboration with Haiti has an urgent component, which in the study to which I have just referred is called an emergency economic recovery programme. In it, immediate actions are proposed to mitigate the sharp deterioration of the economy and of social conditions. In order to do so, one starts from the premise that Haiti's future political stability is linked to the successful beginning of the reconstruction process. This emergency programme would be complemented, and in the end replaced, by medium-term programmes for economic stabilization and growth. The study takes into consideration, *inter alia*, the appropriate institutional framework and the need to bear in mind social components.

Whatever the strategy finally adopted, the necessity and obligation of international assistance must be made compatible with respect for Haiti's sovereignty and recognition of its people's dignity and capacity for self-government and the autonomy of its legitimate representatives. All signs indicate that the situation cannot remain as it is and that considerable progress must have been made in the process of institutional reconstruction and economic and social recovery by the time the important democratic decisions foreseen for the near future are taken.

Haiti has suffered an enormous tragedy. After a century of suffering, that brotherly country cries out for international solidarity. The United Nations has before it an unshirkable responsibility. Fortunately, the Haitian people has resolutely expressed its desire for democracy and respect for human rights. We have a historic opportunity to turn that desire into a reality so that that country and that people, which have such a glorious past, can finally enjoy an era of well-being and prosperity.

Mrs. des Iles (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 12 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which are members of the United Nations: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and my own country, Trinidad and Tobago. The Republic of Suriname also joins in this statement on the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti.

The Caribbean Community and Suriname share the joy of the Haitian people at the return to Haiti of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on 15 October 1994, which signalled the restoration of democratic rule and the end to a reign of terror in that nation. Against all odds, President Aristide persevered, confident in the support of his people, and he has been vindicated.

The scenes of thousands of Haitians rejoicing in the streets throughout the country upon the return of their President represent a clear indictment of the military regime, which terrorized the Haitian people during the three years following the September 1991 overthrow of the democratically elected Government.

The Governments and the peoples of the Caribbean Community and Suriname wish to pay tribute to the thousands of Haitians who have made the ultimate sacrifice in their quest for peace, justice and democracy

in their beloved nation and to the thousands of others who continue to bear the physical and emotional scars of repression and deprivation.

The atrocities committed by the Haitian military and their collaborators over the last three years are well documented in United Nations and other publications. The 1994 report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Haiti catalogues their most recent acts — acts which have even surpassed the horrors of the Duvalier period and the years prior to the December 1990 elections. As the advent of the return of President Aristide and democratic rule appeared more and more inevitable, the Haitian people became victims of ever-increasing incidents of torture, summary executions and wanton brutality.

We are, therefore, all the more moved by the restraint now being shown by the Haitian people who have suffered for decades under successive repressive regimes and for whom the dream of freedom and democracy was temporarily and forcefully shelved in September 1991. It is a tribute to the Haitian spirit that individuals who have been guilty of the worst kind of brutality over a period of years have been turned over, together with their weapons, to the multinational force. Through these acts and their ready acceptance of the current role of the multinational force, the United Nations and the Organization of American States in Haiti, the Haitian people have spoken unequivocally for peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction.

The members of the Caribbean Community and Suriname are pleased to have been able to contribute, within the limits of our resources, to the dawn of a new day in the sister Republic of Haiti. As the United Nations continues to play an increasingly activist role in promoting peace, development and democracy throughout the world, all States, including small States, can and should play their part in furthering the goals of the Organization. In the case of Haiti, with whom we have historical and cultural ties, CARICOM States and Suriname have been consistent in our efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Haitian people and to promote democracy and the restoration of constitutional rule in that country.

Earlier this year, as tens of thousands of Haitians desperately sought to flee the growing repression in their homeland and braved the treacherous journey across the Caribbean Sea in unsafe vessels, States members of CARICOM and Suriname provided temporary refuge to women, men and children. From its inception, CARICOM

nationals have played leading and supportive roles in the International Civilian Mission in Haiti to assist in the promotion and protection of the human rights of the Haitian people.

We have also participated in the monitoring of the Haitian/Dominican Republic border during the period of comprehensive sanctions against Haiti. More recently, CARICOM States have joined others in the multinational force, mandated by Security Council resolution 940 of 31 July 1994, in the effort to establish a stable and secure environment in Haiti following the welcome departure of the military leadership in October of this year.

As a manifestation of the continuing commitment of the States members of CARICOM and Suriname to peace, political stability and democracy in Haiti, we will contribute military and police forces to the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) when it is deployed. For most of us, this will represent the first time that we will be participating in a United Nations peace-keeping mission.

With the significant progress of the multinational force in implementing Security Council resolution 940 (1994), United Nations involvement in Haiti is emerging as one of the success stories of this Organization and as an example of the importance of fostering closer ties with regional organizations.

The United Nations active engagement in developments in Haiti, since its contribution to the successful holding of the historic elections in 1990 and culminating in the triumphant return of President Aristide, attests to its commitment and that of its membership to the cause of peace, justice and development in Haiti, a founding Member of the Organization.

CARICOM States and Suriname implore the international community to heed the caution expressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his 1994 report on the work of the organization, as he addressed the problems of crises around the world. He stated that

"In some instances, a nation has successfully emerged from a crisis only to lose the attention of the international community. This represents a dangerous trend." (A/49/1, para. 325).

Haiti, the Latin American and Caribbean region and the international community can ill afford the

consequences of an abrupt and premature disengagement from developments in Haiti. Moreover, the United Nations itself can hardly endure such a blow to its credibility and its new proactive and supportive role in the pursuit of peace, democracy and development.

For Haiti the road ahead is fraught with formidable obstacles and challenges. The grim reality of political instability and social and economic privation, in this the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere, was further exacerbated following the *coup d'etat* of September 1991. Deterioration of the already weak economy of Haiti was compounded by the suspension by donor countries of development programmes, the effects of progressively severe sanctions and increasing isolation. Given the desire of the international community to overcome the political crisis, only the most vulnerable of Haitians received limited humanitarian assistance during that period. Unemployment is reported to have risen to approximately 70 per cent, poverty and hunger became more widespread and the health and other social services deteriorated markedly.

Haiti, like the other vulnerable islands of the Caribbean, is also highly susceptible to the vagaries of natural disasters and environmental degradation. As pointed out by the Secretary-General in his 1994 report on a development strategy for small island developing States, large-scale disasters are not restricted to such entities, but natural disasters are a particular problem in those countries because the effects are pervasive and often totally devastating. Two weeks ago, we were all reminded of the fragility of the environment and the economic and social infrastructures of Haiti when tropical storm "Gordon" wrought devastation on that nation. That storm resulted in more than 400 deaths and approximately 15,000 of the 55,000 families affected by the storm were rendered homeless.

We in the Caribbean Community and Suriname extend our heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of Haiti and particularly to the many families who have endured such a great loss. We are heartened by the speedy response of the United Nations and the international community to this recent tragedy in Haiti. We also commend the efforts of the United Nations, which has been working closely with the Haitian Government, international and regional financial and development institutions, and the multinational force, to bring relief to the many victims and to restore affected areas of the country to some semblance of normalcy.

There is a growing consensus among nations and within multinational organizations and institutions that, in post-conflict situations, the medium- and long-term development objectives of the affected States should be addressed, in addition to their short-term emergency requirements. Particularly at this time of rising expectations among the population, Haiti is now in dire need of international assistance, without which peace, political stability and sustainable social and economic development will remain unattainable goals.

We, therefore, support the proposed activities of the United Nations Development Programme, which involve assistance in the strengthening of Haiti's democratic institutions and its electoral and judicial systems, the revitalization of the economy, environmental rehabilitation, the tackling of numerous social problems and the continued provision of humanitarian assistance.

We likewise support fully the Secretary-General's recommendation in his recent report on the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti that the mandate of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti be expanded to take into account new developments and needs, thereby maintaining its high level of effectiveness.

Increased effectiveness of the small advance team of the United Nations Mission in Haiti now deployed in that country is also crucial to the success of United Nations operations in Haiti. CARICOM States and Suriname therefore support the call of the Secretary-General to increase the size of this team up to 500, in order to facilitate the laying of the proper groundwork for the successful deployment of the United Nations Mission in Haiti in the not too distant future.

In this the tenth year of the establishment of formal relations between Haiti and the Caribbean Community, we wish to reiterate our continued commitment to the goal of involving Haiti to a greater extent in the programmes and activities of the subregional body and its various mechanisms. Haiti's integration in hemispheric affairs will also be strengthened by its recent signing of the Convention establishing the Association of Caribbean States.

As the international community joins forces with the democratically elected Government of Haiti in its task of nation-building, the time has come for all Haitians, including the poor, who have long been excluded from active involvement in the economic, social and political life of the society, to be afforded the opportunity to

participate fully in the process of strengthening and reforming the nation's political structures and promoting economic and social development. It is only through true partnership that the vision of a new Haiti will be realized, a new Haiti in which the institutions of society are at the service of all Haitians, with equity and with justice.

Mr. Owada (Japan): When we gathered here last year to consider the situation in Haiti, the mood was one of discouragement, if not despair. Thus it is with great pleasure and relief that in coming together today we can celebrate the restoration of the legitimate and democratically elected Government in Haiti.

Japan salutes all those in Haiti who fought so courageously for the return of the Head of State that they had chosen of their own free will, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Their struggle has not been in vain: their aspirations have been realized. We also welcome the formation of a new Cabinet, which is essential to the proper functioning of a democracy.

I should like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General and the Security Council for their vigorous efforts in behalf of Haiti. The peacefully deployed multinational force is to be commended for the crucial role it played in paving the way for President Aristide's return. All those who are participating in that force deserve the appreciation of the international community. Japan hopes that the establishment of a secure and stable environment will soon permit the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Haiti, as authorized by Security Council resolution 940 (1994), so that the work begun by the multinational force can be further pursued.

A first step has thus been taken. But the hard work is not over yet and much remains to be done to ensure that democracy takes firm hold in Haiti. President Aristide has asked the international community to provide desperately needed assistance for Haiti's reconstruction efforts.

At the beginning of October a group of donors, including Japan, met to work together to eliminate Haiti's arrears to international financial institutions once it had re-established a democratic government. Japan also decided to end the freeze on economic cooperation with Haiti it had imposed in September 1991 following the *coup d'état*. This month my Government announced that it would extend through the World Food Programme and the International Committee of the Red Cross humanitarian aid in the amount of \$1 million to assist returnees and other vulnerable groups in Haiti. And, most recently, it

committed \$400,000 in emergency aid to help the Haitian people recover from the destruction caused by the hurricane two weeks ago.

Haiti's journey toward peace and prosperity has just begun. It is ultimately only the Haitian people themselves who can ensure that democracy will flourish; it is through their own efforts that the promise of prosperity will be fulfilled. However, the Haitian people should be confident in their efforts toward national restoration, reconciliation and reconstruction, for the international community stands ready to support them as it has done throughout the past three difficult years. Japan, for its part, will continue to follow the progress made in Haiti's democratization and reconstruction efforts with a view to deciding what further support it can offer as appropriate.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): The course of events in Haiti has changed dramatically since the re-establishment of democratic rule in that sister nation. The determination and courageous struggle of the Haitian people, with the assistance of the international community as a whole, were instrumental in achieving this new phase. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide is now back in power and the legitimate aspirations to peace and prosperity should be fulfilled.

The abrupt breakdown of constitutional order in Haiti in 1991 caused constant and deep concern within the international community. The climate of wanton violence and disregard for the basic principles of human dignity became routine in the country. These violations included arbitrary disappearances, illegal imprisonments, torture and suspicious deaths, including the deaths of close associates of President Aristide such as Mr. Antoine Gameri and former Justice Minister Guy Malary. The international community deplored and condemned in the most emphatic way the course of events in Haiti.

First the Organization of American States (OAS) and then the United Nations took vigorous measures against the de facto authorities. A series of resolutions by the OAS, adopted from the very beginning of the crisis, demonstrated the commitment of the countries of the hemisphere to the return of democracy in Haiti. Efforts at the regional level subsequently received the support of the United Nations.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the partnership between the United Nations and the Organization of American States proved to be an

important success story within the scope of Chapter VIII of the Charter. In our view, the cooperation and coordination in this field between the United Nations and the regional organizations should continue, in compliance with the respective mandates and charters of the two bodies, with a view to strengthening the international community's support for Haiti.

The establishment of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH) by General Assembly resolution 47/20 B bears testimony to the useful cooperation between the two organizations. Under very difficult circumstances, the MICIVIH in the past played an important role in detecting a large number of arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions and other violations of human rights. Terror and violence were routine methods employed by the de facto authorities to stifle the people of Haiti.

The signing in 1993 of the Governors Island Agreement, approved both by the legitimate Government and by the military junta, gave us renewed hope for the future of the people of Haiti. Unfortunately, these hopes were dashed because the de facto authorities disregarded their commitments.

In the Latin American and the Caribbean region there should be no room for regimes of force. The aspirations of our peoples are clearly directed towards strengthening democratic institutions. At the same time, we should not fail to state that together with the ideals of democratic solidarity we have built in our region a solid legal tradition of respect for the sovereignty and independence of States within it. Article 2(b) of the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) states that one essential purpose of the OAS is

"To promote and consolidate representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of non-intervention".

In the particular case of Haiti, since the eruption of the crisis we have advocated recourse to peaceful means to achieve our goal. Had the sanctions regime imposed against the de facto authorities in the unique and exceptional circumstances that prevailed in Haiti been put into force without hesitation and the means of discussion that were still at our disposal been fully employed, perhaps the international community could have confined its action to the deployment of a traditional United Nations peace-keeping force.

Now that a new phase has been reached in Haiti it is important that appropriate attention be paid to the challenging tasks of reconstruction. Democracy by itself might not be enough to guarantee the road to much-needed development.

President Aristide's restoration to power should not interrupt the international attention paid to Haiti. The international community should not forsake its responsibilities to provide the Haitian people with the generous cooperation it expects for economic and social recovery and with humanitarian emergency assistance.

Since the very beginning of the crisis Brazil has stood alongside the Haitian people, supporting them on the arduous road towards democracy. We will continue to do so. The people of Haiti deserve nothing less.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.